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President:	Mr. Osei-Adjei	(Ghana)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Chevalier
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Biabaroh-Iboro
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Indonesia	Mr. Pratomo
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Peru	Mr. Chávez
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Nasser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Rogachev
	Slovakia	Ms. Algayerová
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff

Agenda

Women and peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2007/567)

Letter dated 8 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2007/598)

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07-55957 (E)

The meeting resumed at 3.10 p.m.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Benin in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ehouzou (Benin) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I wish to remind all speakers, as I indicated this morning, to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I wish to express our gratitude to you, Sir, for organizing and presiding over this open debate. I would also like to thank the guest speakers of this morning for their very insightful presentations.

If we are to move closer towards realizing the principles that Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) set out, concrete actions have to be taken by all players, beginning with the Member States, the United Nations system, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations, especially those women's organizations that are working on the ground.

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) needs to be implemented in a coherent and effective manner. Japan welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (S/2007/567). The report provides an overview of what the System-wide Action Plan has achieved so far, what gaps exist in its implementation and what challenges must be surmounted if the Plan is to be completely successful. We are also pleased with the development of a policy framework, implementation strategies and a results-based management framework, as they will assist in improving accountability, monitoring and reporting for the Action Plan for 2008-2009.

The initiative by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Women, Peace and Security to build a database on good practices and lessons learned in implementing resolution 1325 (2000) is welcome. We hope it will be used primarily to indicate how the activities of the United Nations system are contributing to actual positive changes in women's lives on the ground. We are also pleased with the appointment of Ambassador Ellen Margrethe Løj as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia, and we congratulate her. She is the first woman Special Representative of the Secretary-General among those currently serving.

The principles of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) have been increasingly shared and applied in many post-conflict situations. However, we have witnessed so many countries emerging from conflict sliding back into violence. In that context, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission was a milestone in achieving the purposes of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

A gender perspective must be integrated into peacebuilding activities. The consolidation of peace requires the full participation of women in all related processes, starting with peace negotiations, securing domestic stability, arranging for humanitarian and reconstruction assistance and national reconciliation. Japan is pleased to note that gender equality issues have been identified and integrated into the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in the cases of both Burundi and Sierra Leone. We have to ensure that the active participation of women is fully incorporated in post-conflict strategies. As Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Japan will make every effort to ensure that the Commission takes up a policy and strategic review of the role of women in peacebuilding processes as a follow-up to today's open debate in the Security Council.

There is no use in discussing conflict or peace without taking into consideration the situation of the vulnerable people whom conflict impacts most directly, especially women. In post-conflict situations, women are also able to play a critical role by bringing their special needs into every stage and process of peace consolidation and ensuring that those needs are reflected. That clearly indicates the importance of a

people-centred approach which focuses on the empowerment of individuals and communities and not only on protecting them from threats to their safety and basic well-being. That is the human security approach that Japan has been promoting globally and locally with special efforts.

In order to put the concept of human security into practice and to promote concrete action, Japan has supported the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security since 1999. The Trust Fund has supported projects to assist women in conflict and post-conflict situations in many countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rwanda, Burundi and Afghanistan. Those projects have helped in creating conditions for coexistence and in promoting reconciliation among people belonging to former parties to a conflict. We hope that the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, together with the Peacebuilding Fund, will be utilized to support concrete projects which will facilitate women's initiatives to restore economic and social stability in post-conflict situations.

In closing, Japan wishes to pledge its continuing support for efforts to realize the goals of resolution 1325 (2000) so that women will be ensured security and safety in their lives and so that their special needs will be taken care of in times of armed conflict and in peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Marjatta Rasi, Under-Secretary of State of Finland.

Ms. Rasi (Finland): First of all, let me thank the Secretary-General for his recent report on women and peace and security (S/2007/567). As the report demonstrates, progress has been made in a number of fields in implementing Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Yet, as we all know, a lot of work still remains to be done in order to overcome institutional and organizational challenges and gaps. Those challenges have been identified accurately in the System-wide Action Plan for 2008-2009.

For more than 50 years, Finland has participated in peacekeeping operations. Finland also has a long history of advancing women's rights, both nationally and internationally. During the Finnish European Union presidency in 2006, the Council of the European Union decided that gender aspects would be incorporated in all activities of the European Security and Defence Policy. To facilitate that task, all European Union member States developed a checklist on mainstreaming gender into the European Security and Defence Policy. The adoption of those two instruments was an important step in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

Finland is now in the process of drafting a national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We, in close cooperation with civil society, are committed to doing our part to ensure that women's full potential is utilized in the work for better security. The action plan will pay special attention to the development of a gender perspective for national capabilities. The fact that United Nations peacekeeping missions and crisis management operations of the European Union and other regional organizations are dependent on national capabilities means that it is crucial that a gender perspective be integrated into the training of national forces and civilian personnel. We will also pay attention to women's recruitment for crisis management operations. We should not underestimate the power of example in crisis areas. Attention will also be paid to women's and girls' rights and protection. Finland will also consider setting up a pool of experts trained in gender issues.

Let me also highlight the need for increased attention to facilitating women's equal and active participation, from conflict prevention to peace negotiations to reconstruction and political participation. As providers, professionals, mothers and spouses, women feel the impact of conflicts more strongly and often better understand the different dimensions of conflict. Without women's involvement there will be no sustainable peace and we may risk losing the support and respect of the majority of the population.

We, the international community, are in a key position to promote gender-balanced participation by all parties. In this context, I would like to refer to the important work towards a just and sustainable peace undertaken by the International Women's Commission, founded by a group of Palestinian and Israeli women leaders and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The President of Finland, Tarja Halonen, is one of the honorary Chairs of the Commission. The Commission has stressed the importance of involving women in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, and works to include gender equality and a gender perspective in the attempts to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the

same vein, other locally initiated dialogues, such as the face-to-face meetings of the Kosovo Women's Network and Serbia's Women in Black, should be recognized and encouraged.

Finally, I would like to assure you, Sir, of Finland's commitment to close cooperation with you and the Members of the United Nations in the implementation of the 2008-2009 System-wide Action Plan.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Iceland.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): Let me begin by thanking the delegation of Ghana for convening this open debate on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. I would also like to thank that delegation for providing a concept paper for this meeting (S/2007/598, annex) which contributes to a constructive debate. This important subject deserves our full attention and, more especially, our concrete action.

Let me also thank the Secretary-General himself for his words here this morning, as well as Under-Secretary-General Guéhenno, Ms. Rachel Mayanja, Ms. Joanne Sandler and Ms. Gina Torry for their valuable input earlier today. We were indeed very pleased to hear of the Secretary-General's appointment of our Danish friend, Ellen Margrethe Løj, as his Special Representative in Liberia. We congratulate her most sincerely, and we know that this important position will be in capable hands.

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) is unique. It underscores the central role that women play in conflict resolution and the need to protect their rights. It has proved to be an important tool in promoting the direct and active involvement of women in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. It has put gender issues and gender perspective firmly on the agenda of the Council and is relevant to all its actions.

Women are critical to the consolidation of peace and should be part of all peace processes. It is our duty to ensure that the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000) are realized at the national, regional and international levels, and that women can fully and equally participate at all levels of decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and peace-building. We must translate words into action.

Iceland welcomes the comprehensive report of the Secretary General on women and peace and security (S/2007/567). The report clearly indicates that significant progress has been made in many areas towards implementation of the System-wide Action Plan on resolution 1325 (2000) for 2005-2007, in particular in areas such as peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding. The report points out, however, that progress has been uneven in many substantive areas of the Action Plan and gaps remain in its implementation. Much therefore remains to be done at the United Nations level, both at headquarters and in the field.

In this context, we highly appreciate the work on the 2008-2009 System-wide Action Plan. We agree that the Action Plan should be a results-oriented monitoring and reporting tool for strengthened inter-agency coordination, enhanced accountability and gender mainstreaming. The United Nations system should engage Governments, civil society and regional organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, in its implementation. We need to share experiences and good practices between regional organizations.

Iceland fully endorses the important role of the Peacebuilding Commission in the promotion of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The Peacebuilding Commission should integrate a gender perspective in all phases of its work.

Iceland strongly supports Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and is fully committed to implementing it. That includes promoting the rights of women and girls and mainstreaming gender concerns in the United Nations system and in our foreign policy. Iceland is finalizing an action plan in order to intensify our implementation of resolution 1325 (2000); the action plan will be finalized in cooperation with civil society. Emphasis will be on developing a plan which is both ambitious and achievable at the same time. Focus will be put on gender mainstreaming and the participation of women in peacebuilding and stabilization in post-conflict societies.

Iceland now participates in peacebuilding and reconstruction in nine places around the world, including for the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in Liberia, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as well as for UNICEF in Palestine. In the past few years Iceland has encouraged women to increase their participation in

these assignments, and currently over 40 per cent of deployed personnel of the Iceland Crisis Response Unit are women.

Iceland's policy on development cooperation attaches great importance to women in conflict areas. Much of Iceland's development cooperation is directed towards facilitating a smooth transition from conflict situations with special emphasis on women and their role in peacebuilding. In this context, I would like to underline the important role of UNIFEM, and I am pleased to mention that the Government of Iceland has decided to double its current contribution to the Fund. This marks a thirty-fold increase in Iceland's contributions to UNIFEM since 2003, an increase which will bring Iceland amongst the top donors to the Fund.

Iceland regards the equal participation of women in peace processes as fundamental for achieving, maintaining and promoting sustainable peace. All of us have a clear duty to work towards the full and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

The United Nations system, Member States and civil society must therefore consistently work together to implement the resolution at all levels. We must translate words into action. For example, ways should be found of involving women in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process in a consistent and structured way. Here I would like to call to the Council's attention that there already exists a forum of influential women from both sides, together with international figures in the International Women's Commission for a Just and Sustainable Israeli-Palestinian Peace. We would like to use this opportunity to urge the Quartet to consider how the peace process can benefit from influential and effective groups like the International Women's Commission.

I thank the President for convening this important meeting. We look forward to further discussions in order to improve the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Ms. Banks (New Zealand): May I first commend the President for the presidential statement that will be adopted at the conclusion of this debate. We particularly welcome the request to include in relevant reporting of the Secretary-General greater disaggregated data on the impact of armed conflicts on women and girls. May I also welcome the recent appointment of Ms. Ellen Løj as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia, which makes her the only woman among the more than 20 Special Representatives of the Secretary-General across the political and peacekeeping missions of the United Nations. So, it is indeed a cause for celebration.

New Zealand recognizes the important role that women play in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, and we strongly support Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Our commitment to the resolution is reflected in our national, regional and international approach to peacebuilding, conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

We welcome the advances that have been made in those areas by the United Nations system and by Member States. We appreciate the Secretary-General's 2007 report on women and peace and security (S/2007/567) and the many positive examples it describes of the progressive work happening in this field. We are pleased to note the work done to restructure the Organization's implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) under the 2008-2009 United Nations System-Wide Action Plan, as well as the Plan's increased focus on accountability, monitoring and reporting.

New Zealand is taking a number of concrete steps to reinforce its support for resolution 1325 (2000). First, we are committed to encouraging women to undertake assignments on peacekeeping missions. Women from the New Zealand Defence Forces, the New Zealand Police and our wider society are an integral part of New Zealand's participation in regional, United Nations and other international peacekeeping efforts. That includes women working in high-risk areas, such as Afghanistan, and in our operational missions, such as that in Timor-Leste. Up to 30 per cent of all our police peacekeeping deployments are female — among the highest rate in the world. New Zealand recognizes, too, that diversity assists peacekeeping missions in reaching out to a wider sector of the community, which is a fundamental element for effective peacebuilding.

Secondly, this year New Zealand was proud to withdraw its final reservation to the Convention on the

Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which concerned women in the armed forces.

Thirdly, I should like to say that the New Zealand Defence Force recently approved a diversity strategy, which we call "Valuing Diversity: Leadership in Action". The strategy recognizes the value of the full integration of women, the positive effect that it has on morale and the sense of belonging to a wider team in which all members can make meaningful contributions. This approach also recognizes the benefits of having more women at senior levels of the Defence Force. We have worked hard to ensure the integration of women at all levels and in all areas of the New Zealand Defence Force, including combat. We are increasing the number of women in the higher ranks, and we are becoming more effective in retaining women in the Force throughout their careers.

New Zealand's response to resolution 1325 (2000) is proactive. We appreciate the fact that, even in peacetime, it is important to ensure the security of women. New Zealand is currently involved in the Pacific Prevention of Domestic Violence Programme, a joint initiative of New Zealand's International Aid and Development Agency (NZAID), the New Zealand Police and the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police organization. Members of the New Zealand Police deliver advice, training and operational support on domestic violence to police forces and communities across the Pacific. This initiative focuses on regional coordination and benchmarking, police capability, relationship-building, the strengthening of Government policy and legislation, a whole-Government approach to domestic violence and ways to influence social change.

In closing, I would like to assure the Security Council that New Zealand, through its development cooperation programmes, peacekeeping efforts and domestic policies, will continue to seek ways to enhance and strengthen the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

The President: I now call on the representative of Kazakhstan.

Ms. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): At the outset, allow me to congratulate the newly elected members of the Security Council and to express our belief that their valuable participation in the work of the Council will contribute significantly to the promotion of world peace. I would also like to thank the Ghanaian presidency for organizing this debate and to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Ad Interim Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the Coordinator of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security for their insightful statements.

In 2000, the Security Council adopted a milestone resolution that recognized the vital role of women in the prevention of conflicts and peacebuilding and drew the international community's attention to the crucial issues of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls and the importance of incorporating the gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, negotiation processes and Security Council missions.

Ever since the Security Council has organized annual discussions to review the implementation of the resolution, it has been indicated repeatedly by delegations that women's involvement in decision-making on security issues and in peace processes has had a very positive effect on the peaceful resolution of conflicts and on post-conflict peacebuilding. We are pleased to note that, since the resolution's adoption, the understanding of the role of women in peacemaking, peacekeeping and, no less important, peacebuilding has been growing in recent years. Enhancing the role of women in the area of peacebuilding and security and putting an end to violence against women and girls are priorities for UNIFEM and related United Nations bodies.

Therefore, our delegation notes with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2007/567) and the efforts made by the United Nations system to implement the resolution at all levels. Kazakhstan welcomes the continuation of United Nations activities in this area through the formulation of the new 2008-2009 Action Plan and its five indicated areas of work. However, we would be pleased to see, in addition to monitoring and accountability, greater emphasis placed on effective implementation of the Plan, the participation of civil society, capacity-building aimed at sustaining positive changes in the situation and the role of women in conflict and post-conflict countries.

Our delegation believes that there is a need to expand the sharing of best practices, knowledge and experience by women who have been involved in

peacebuilding and peace negotiations with those who wish to join the peace process in conflict areas. There are many, many wise women throughout the world. Why not include on the Council's agenda situations where women have been active and invite them to speak, since they all have national experience and knowledge of their national history? At least, I think that that would not be a bad idea. We are also of the view that the inclusion of the promotion of the culture of peace and tolerance into the thematic area of prevention would contribute significantly to the effectiveness of United Nations conflict prevention activities in the field.

Traditionally, the role of women in society and politics was critical in Kazakh culture. They also participated in decision-making process on issues of war and peace, and no crucial decision was taken without their approval. Women had the power to stop wars and armed conflicts. They were promoters of peace and concord in the country.

Therefore, our country is noted for its multi-ethnic and multi-faith nature. The house called Kazakhstan is home to some 130 nationalities and ethnic groups and more than 40 faiths, which live together as one big family. Indeed, the internal policy and international initiatives of the Republic of Kazakhstan are truly based on the principles of trust and dialogue. Kazakhstan was the initiator of such unique international forums as the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICA). In this regard, we believe that Kazakhstan's valuable experience in protecting and strengthening agreement and harmonious relations among the various ethnic and religious groups of our country may be of interest to the world public.

In conclusion, in reiterating our strong commitment to the goals of the Beijing Declaration, the Cairo Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and in stating the great importance we attach to resolution 1325 (2000), allow me to stress yet again that stronger commitments should be made and more actions undertaken by Member States and the United Nations system to expedite attainment of the goals and tasks outlined in the resolution.

The President: I now call on the representative of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Wenawaser (Liechtenstein): Mr. President, we wish to thank you and your delegation for organizing this debate, for preparing a concept paper (S/2007/598, annex) in advance, and for putting together the presidential statement that will be adopted later today.

The concept paper and the report submitted by the Secretary-General (S/2007/567) make it clear that we must considerably strengthen our efforts to guarantee the protection of women and girls in conflict-affected societies and to ensure their full and equal participation in peace processes, including negotiations and decision-making. It is a well documented fact that civilians, particularly women and children, continue to account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and that they are increasingly targeted by combatants and other armed elements.

Durable peace and reconciliation are heavily compromised if the perpetrators of such acts are not brought to justice. The Security Council therefore has a vital role to play in ensuring that targeted measures are taken to protect women and girls from rape and other forms of sexual violence in conflict situations and that there is no impunity for such acts.

The referral of the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court (ICC) was a landmark decision, both legally and politically. It was a strong message by the Security Council that the international community will not tolerate impunity for the most serious crimes under international law, including gender-related crimes. We would like to encourage the Council to continue to consider the ICC as a policy option. Referrals to the ICC must, however, be accompanied by sustained political support from the Council through all phases of the judicial proceedings, and they must in some situations be accompanied by other substantive measures.

Within the United Nations system, programmes have been developed to build the leadership and peacemaking capacities of women at all stages of conflict and emergence from conflict. My Government has been financing relevant activities by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

There is ample evidence that women are very active in informal peace processes. In spite of these developments, the official presence of women in such

processes is still minimal. There continues to be a lack of political will to recognize women's contributions to peace and to acknowledge their right to participate effectively in peace negotiations. Strengthening women's capacity as peacemakers must be pursued in parallel with increasing women's participation. Creating awareness of peace negotiations as a tool for achieving gender equality is essential.

Against this background, we have consistently and for long years been advocating the appointment of women as special representatives and envoys of the Secretary-General. We fully support the call addressed to the Secretary-General by the Women Leaders' Working Group on 19 June 2007 to establish, as a matter of high priority, a mechanism to increase the number of women considered for leading United Nations positions, including as heads of peace operations. Like others before me, I welcome in this context the appointment of our former colleague, Ambassador Ellen Margrethe Løj of Denmark as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia. Such appointments can play a catalytic role in promoting the full potential of women as peacemakers.

This debate presents another opportunity to promote the effective, coherent and systematic implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) through better accountability mechanisms. Member States and civil society organizations have highlighted in the past the need for the Council to develop a reporting and monitoring mechanism to ensure the systematic integration and implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in its own work. Such a mechanism could address implementation gaps at the international level, such as inadequate monitoring and reporting on implementation by field missions, particularly on grave violations of human rights, such as sexual violence, and it could improve the information basis for Council deliberations.

It could also strengthen the accountability for the implementation of the resolution at the national level, while allowing for better informed definition of relevant capacity-building needs. We support this idea and call upon the Council to endow itself with more effective oversight on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), including through the establishment of a monitoring mechanism with appropriate leadership to ensure its active engagement with all aspects of the work of the Council.

We believe that, after seven years, the time has come to realize the establishment of such a mechanism. Strengthening the protection of women and girls in conflict-affected societies from rape and other forms of sexual violence should be important enough to translate the many calls for the creation of such a mechanism into concrete action.

The President: I now call on the representative of Israel.

Mr. Gillerman (Israel): At the outset, allow me to congratulate the Ghanaian presidency on its able stewardship of the Council this month and to thank it for convening this open debate on women and peace and security.

As we mark the seventh anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), I also wish to thank the Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and Ms. Rachel Mayanja for their informative statements.

Next year, the international community will reach another milestone when it celebrates the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration, universally recognized as an international instrument of the highest importance, is of increasing significance as a unifying factor among all peoples and cultures. It remains a living document that continues to inform and inspire the struggle for rights and freedoms of all people around the world. In this regard, the spirit of resolution 1325 (2000) lives and breathes within the Declaration.

My delegation would like to commend the efforts of the various entities within the United Nations, among them, the Division for the Advancement of Women, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women for their efforts in promoting resolution 1325 (2000) and for all that they do to make the voices of women heard.

Israel strongly believes that women must play an equal role in all aspects of State and civil society. We have no doubt that the advancement and progress of women will translate into nothing less than the advancement and progress for all. As such, Israel remains committed to the principles and goals of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the principles outlined in the World Summit Outcome

(General Assembly resolution 60/1) adopted by our leaders in 2005.

The deliberate acts of violence against women and the girl child, especially in situations of armed conflict, are particularly alarming. Women, and children, for that matter, are severely affected by the consequences of armed conflict. We have even seen and are continuing, unfortunately, to see the heinous crime of rape used as a political weapon. The severity of such graphic exploitation, abuse and violation of human rights cannot be overstated, and the perpetrators of these crimes must be brought to justice.

Israel welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2007/567) and its System-wide Action Plan review and update. Similarly, we are pleased at the Secretary-General's efforts to identify women as candidates for senior level positions within the United Nations system, with particular attention given to special representatives. We hope to hear in the future of new appointments of women in senior roles.

With this in mind, we commend the appointment of our former colleague, Ambassador Ellen Løj, as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia. I am sure that her impressive tenure at the United Nations, and especially in the Security Council, will have prepared her well for this important mission, and we wish her well.

Nevertheless, a great deal remains to be done. National mechanisms and machineries for the advancement of women need to be strengthened to ensure women's active participation in public policy formulation on matters of peace and security. The mainstreaming of gender into all policies and programmes at the international and national levels is a crucial factor in the prevention of sexual discrimination, exploitation and abuse. If women are ever to truly see their needs recognized and their interests represented in peace accords, they must have access to peace negotiations from the earliest possible stages. In that regard, Israel has been working through Government and non-governmental channels to increase awareness and amplify the voice of women in peace negotiations and conflict resolution.

In Israel, implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) continues on a variety of levels, including but not limited to distributing Hebrew translations of the resolution, distributing and disseminating information on the resolution to national, regional and non-governmental organization (NGO) bodies, campaigning to raise awareness through public relations work and media coverage and monitoring and documenting the impact of conflict on women and girls. Similarly, the Israeli Women's Equal Rights Law was amended in past years in the spirit of resolution 1325 (2000) mandating that the Israeli Government include women in any group appointed to peacebuilding negotiations and conflict resolution.

I wish to note that this commitment is not merely in theory, but also in practice. We do not just preach it; we practice it. My Minister, Ms. Tzipi Livni, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, was appointed just last week to lead the negotiations with the Palestinians. Due to the important choices being made on the ground — namely, the existence of a Palestinian Government that accepts the Quartet principles and is committed to a dialogue and process with Israel — a sense of renewed hope and optimism can be felt on the ground. As Israeli and Palestinian leaders continue to meet, our goal is to reach an understanding on the widest possible common ground in order to enable progress on the way forward towards the realization of the two-State vision. This is for the benefit of all citizens of the region, men and women alike. Similarly, there is a movement of Israeli and Palestinian women working together from across civil society and the political spectrum to advocate for peace. The recognition and effectiveness of such advocacy organizations and NGOs is a testament to the vibrancy of Israeli democracy and pluralism, and Israel takes great pride in their leadership.

Spinoza, the famed seventeenth-century philosopher, once said that peace is not the absence of war: it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence and justice. Indeed, peace is a holistic state of existence. To truly achieve it, one half of the population cannot be ignored. Only with full participation of women in all aspects of conflict resolution, peacemaking and security will there be a viable social, economic and political subsoil for democratization, sustainable development and peace to grow.

Israel, for its part, is determined that women should play an increasingly active role in peace negotiations and is committed to advancing the role of women in all aspects of society. Israel is hopeful that an enhanced role for women in peace negotiations will

build lasting bridges of understanding with our neighbours and usher in a dawn of harmony and prosperity for all.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, at the outset, I would like to thank you for convening this open debate on women and peace and security and to extend our gratitude to the Secretariat for the report submitted today to the Council on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and related plans and programmes (S/2007/567).

The report of the Secretary-General undoubtedly reflects an enormous effort to follow up implementation of the 2005-2007 Action Plan, as well as to formulate the new Action Plan for 2008-2009. It reflects growing interest by all entities of the United Nations system, along with necessary efficiency, in particular on the part of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and other relevant bodies.

Yet there are many questions that require responses in order to achieve the desired coherence among activities at the level of the Organization and the activities of Member States, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector in implementation of the resolution and the Action Plan. First and foremost, this requires effectively addressing the institutional gaps and challenges identified by the Secretary-General and relating to internal administrative matters. These are caused, on the one hand, by a lack of non-core resources from voluntary contributions, and on the other, by the lack of a clear vision of the ultimate result, which differs from case to case. Another cause is the lack of effective reporting and evaluation on the substantive impact of the Organization's efforts on the ground. Lastly, there is a failure to recognize the vital role that can be played by the Peacebuilding Commission in designing the conceptual framework for addressing this issue, particularly in post-conflict situations, as reflected in operative paragraph 17 of General Assembly resolution 61/143.

Furthermore, it requires us — not only in the Security Council but throughout the United Nations — to formulate a clear system-wide action plan to deal with the issues with the participation of all principal organs, through the simultaneous adoption of resolutions by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

The serious issue before us does not need scrutiny by Member States through the establishment of a monitoring mechanism to guarantee full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and the Action Plan, as suggested by the Secretary-General. Rather, what it needs is a collective international effort to strengthen the capacity of States to help with implementation and to provide the financial resources and technical expertise needed to make progress possible.

Egypt attaches great importance to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) within a holistic framework that mobilizes the efforts of all Governments, civil society and the private sector, and is fully prepared to see the resolution implemented throughout the Arab world and Africa. The Government of Egypt has supported many activities related to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), the Action Plan and the related programmes and has assisted other countries on the African continent to address the matter effectively. We have done this by providing direct technical assistance and trilateral cooperation with other partners. The Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement, one of the major non-governmental organizations in this field, has provided great assistance in that regard. It has done so by convening a series of regional meetings through which governmental and non-governmental organizations support women's activities in achieving peace and stability in the Arab world. In particular, those organizations support the role of women in launching effective political negotiations aimed at reaching settlements to ongoing international political issues.

The Government of Egypt is also making great efforts to strengthen the status of women in all fields, especially in such vital areas as peacekeeping and peacebuilding in post-conflict situations, which require particular attention and follow-up.

Egypt will continue to play its role in national, regional and international efforts to strengthen the status of women, in coordination with the main bodies

responsible for women's issues within the Organization.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico would like to commend you, Mr. President, for convening this recurring open debate on women, peace and security. We would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2007/567) on recent activities with regard to that issue.

In the seven years that have transpired since the historic adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), many countries, international organizations and civil society organizations have spoken in the Security Council to reaffirm their commitment to achieve the full implementation of the resolution. We appreciate the progress made and the work done by the Organization in the area of capacity building to improve the protection of women's rights, as well as its efforts to develop a methodology that will make possible more accurate measurement of the progress made in this field. However, we are concerned that the will that has been expressed in that regard has not resulted in an integrated and coordinated strategy, either within the United Nations system or in affected States, that would make it possible to overcome the diffused nature of efforts undertaken.

We completely agree that countries themselves have a great deal of responsibility for mainstreaming the gender perspective into peace and security issues. It is only through joint implementation of concerted efforts at the international and national levels that we will be able to achieve substantial benefits for women affected by armed conflict.

Women are not passive actors in highly complex emergency situations. They are nevertheless especially vulnerable to the marginalization, poverty and psychological and physical violence that such situations entail. Moreover, women often become targets of war, as they are perceived to embody the cultural and ethnic identities of their societies. In becoming pillars of their communities in times of conflict, their well-being and integrity are intrinsically bound up with the protection of men and children. It is for that reason that implementing the commitments contained in resolution 1325 (2000) cannot be seen as a matter limited solely to ensuring the protection of part of society, but rather as a precondition for achieving sustainable peace for all. Carrying out that task requires short-, medium- and long-term measures. I shall now refer to those that Mexico believes to be the most urgent.

First, there is a need to ratify and unconditionally implement the existing international framework — especially as regards international humanitarian law — including human rights instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Second, all peacekeeping operations approved by the Security Council should include mandates with regard to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

Third, we must strengthen the International Criminal Court, so that, as feasible, it can try those guilty of sexual violence in the context of armed conflict — which is a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute.

Fourth, we must implement measures in all areas to ensure security and access for humanitarian personnel to populations in need of assistance in conflict areas.

Fifth, there is a need for sustained cooperation and coordination between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and United Nations bodies carrying out programmes to benefit women on the ground, such as the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Population Fund.

Sixth, we must establish across-the-board mandatory training programmes in gender issues for United Nations staff working in the areas of peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance.

Seventh, we must put in place effective domestic legislative frameworks to eradicate impunity and establish educational programmes and awareness-raising campaigns on the issue of women's rights, in order to eliminate cultural prejudices against women and empower women to defend themselves against abuses to which they may be subject.

Eighth, and last, we must systematically include women — especially from non-governmental organizations — in the taking of decisions during peace and reconstruction processes. Mexico commends the experience of UNIFEM in that regard. We have

therefore contributed to the work it is doing to ensure the participation of women from civil society in Haiti's peace process, which could be a model in other situations.

Before I conclude, I would like to express Mexico's deep concern at the growing number of cases of sexual abuse against women during armed conflict, and even in the process of peacebuilding. Such recent cases as those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan and Iraq, to mention a few, cannot be tolerated either by the Governments of those countries or by the international community. The international community must take concrete steps to eradicate such practices.

The adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) was the outcome of the political resolve of the members of the Security Council to provide protection for the millions of women affected by armed conflict. The time has come to translate the resolution into real action on the ground.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Zambia.

Mr. Kapambwe (Zambia): I have the honour to address the Security Council on behalf of the member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) — namely, Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe and my own country, Zambia.

We would like to thank the Secretary-General, the Special Adviser to the Secretary General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, the Ad Interim Executive Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the Coordinator of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security for their introductory statements, which were very instructive.

SADC welcomes the opportunity, on the seventh anniversary of the adoption of the landmark resolution 1325 (2000), to participate in this open debate on women, peace and security, focused on achieving coherent and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). As we are all aware, the resolution, among other things, calls for the incorporation of a gender perspective in negotiating and implementing peace agreements, planning refugee camps and peacekeeping operations, and reconstructing war-torn societies. Today's debate therefore provides us with an opportunity to assess the concrete and specific efforts in the implementation of the resolution at all levels and the role of the Security Council in such efforts.

The adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) by the Security Council and the six subsequent presidential statements on women, peace and security provide a solid framework for action in all areas of the peace process. The importance of women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security cannot be overstated. While some progress has been made in the implementation of the resolution, greater coordinated efforts are required to achieve the goal of full implementation. In that regard, SADC calls on the international community to render sustained support in the development of national action plans, including financial and human resources, that will eventually drive the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

We thank the Secretary-General for his report, contained in document S/2007/567, on women and peace and security. The report reviews and monitors the implementation of the 2005-2007 United Nations System-wide Action Plan and identifies gaps and challenges, including in the areas of funding of gender projects and insufficient institutional capacity for gender mainstreaming. We must address those challenges if we are to obtain the desired results. We welcome the recommendations contained in the report, which we believe will contribute to the acceleration of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

We would like to commend the Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, the Inter-Agency Task Force on Women, Peace and Security, and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women for their commendable work in coming up with a holistic and coherent 2008-2009 United Nations System-wide Action Plan, which will serve as a results-based programme and monitoring and reporting tool. The responsibility of ensuring the full realization of the Plan rests with the international community. The Security Council should hold national Governments accountable for the implementation of the Action Plan.

The high number of victims of violence continues to be a concern for SADC. We are saddened that women continue to bear the brunt of grave violations of human rights, including violence and sexual abuses. We condemn all those parties that perpetuate acts of violence and abuse against women and children. We call for the speedy investigation of all cases of violence and sexual abuse, especially those committed against women and children. The culture of impunity must be stopped by, among other things, bringing to justice all the perpetrators.

SADC is encouraged by the progress on mainstreaming gender in relevant policies and programmes on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR). It is necessary to recognize the needs of women and girl ex-combatants in the DDR process and to ensure that their concerns are taken on board from the planning stages. We commend the work that has been done by the United Nations Children's Fund in reintegration projects that has led to the release of girls from the armed forces in various countries.

We commend the various United Nations agencies that have undertaken capacity-building efforts, including the development of the training models. We would, however, request that there be synergy and coherence in the various training models produced. We wish to reiterate that awareness of resolution 1325 (2000) needs to be broadened and that capacities at the national level to implement the resolution need to be enhanced. In that endeavour, we wish to underscore the importance of building capacity at the local level and, in particular, the capacity of national and local women's groups on the ground.

Experience has shown that the participation of women in peace processes produces positive results, especially because they, together with children, are the major victims of atrocities committed in conflict. Women need to hold decision-making positions. It is imperative that women be encouraged and supported to run for offices, especially in countries emerging from conflicts. In that regard, we wish to commend the work undertaken by United Nations agencies in facilitating the promotion and effective participation of women in decision-making processes.

In conclusion, I wish to state that SADC remains committed to the full and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). We in the international community have an obligation to ensure that the rights of women the world over are protected and that their place in all aspects of the peace process is assured. It is their equal participation and their full involvement that will contribute to the effective maintenance and promotion of sustainable peace and security.

The President: I call on the representative of Colombia.

Ms. Blum (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to express my delegation's gratitude to you, Sir, for having convened this open debate on women and peace and security, and for following up on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

It is of the utmost importance to share experiences and points of view vis-à-vis the design of a coherent and effective strategy for implementing resolution 1325 (2000). In its capacity as a member of the "friends of 1325", Colombia attaches special importance to that process, in which it has participated since its earliest stages. Our participation is guided by the conviction that the effective promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in the areas of peace and security is critical. The United Nations system can effectively contribute to the fulfilment of the responsibilities incumbent on States in those areas through specific cooperation initiatives.

In that regard, we note with satisfaction the Secretary-General's acknowledgement in his report of 12 September, 2007, of the significant progress that has been achieved in the implementation of the aforementioned resolution. The report states that

> "One of the major lessons learned from the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in 2005-2007 is that without concerted efforts with Governments and civil society at the country level, the implementation of the resolution would remain elusive" (*A/2007/567, para. 36*).

That is particularly true for Colombia, where interaction between civil society and the United Nations system has been an ongoing factor in the drafting and implementation of comprehensive approaches to programmes for the advancement of women and the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Through democratic security policies, economic recovery, social equity and human development, Colombia has made notable progress in that field.

In Colombia, the Office of the Presidential Adviser for Women's Equity and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs established a series of round tables on women, peace and security, which have conducted assessments and promoted awareness of resolution 1325 (2000) and of the country report on its implementation. A group of women from different regions have also received training in conflict prevention and conflict resolution. The constant support of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the help of many non-governmental organizations have enabled the Government to conduct an important number of activities, initiatives and projects designed to promote and implement resolution 1325 (2000) and to mainstream gender issues in national policies.

That is reflected in the National Development Plan 2006-2010, and I would like to highlight some of the Plan's activities with respect to affirmative action, a cross-cutting approach to gender and social reactivation.

Colombia is implementing an affirmative action policy entitled "Women — Builders of peace and development". The policy prioritizes goals related to employment and enterprise development, education and culture, political participation and the prevention of violence against women. It includes more than 100 protection measures, to be applied by various authorities, to counter domestic violence, marriage breakdown and labour discrimination.

The cross-cutting approach to gender involves all State agencies. Its results are reflected in laws, jurisprudence and public policies with a gender perspective, in strengthening institutional mechanisms working on women's issues, and in consolidating disaggregated information systems, among other things. I would like to highlight four structural strategies within the social reactivation policy that promote greater gender equality: human capital development and employment, consolidation of the social security system, a network for comprehensive attention to the population living in extreme poverty and the promotion of microcredit.

I would also like to highlight the helpful role that the Organization of American States has played at the regional level, through the Inter-American Commission of Women. Following up on the mandates of the Inter-American Program on the Promotion of Women's Human Rights and Gender Equity and Equality and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, the Commission conducted the Training Course on Gender, Conflict and Peace-Building for the Andean and Central American regions. The recommendations of that project are particularly relevant for our debate today, since they underline how it is possible to build an agenda from the regional perspective that contributes to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

In the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security, it is stated that Governments have the primary responsibility for implementing the resolution. With that understanding, Colombia appreciates the role that the Security Council has played in guiding and revitalizing, through resolution 1325 (2000) and its plan of action, the process of consultation with concerned entities of the United Nations system and civil society organizations to cooperate with Governments to meet their commitments within the framework of that resolution.

On the other hand, we understand that in pursuing these issues, the Security Council contributes substantially to the preservation of peace and security, which supports its central mandate as contained in the United Nations Charter. Colombia welcomes the recommendation contained in the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security that the United Nations system accelerate the development of a comprehensive knowledge and information system, accessible to Member States, in order to share good practices and lessons learned in the implementation of the resolution. That type of initiative should be added in a positive manner to the national and regional initiatives aimed at strengthening national capacity-building for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

We also believe that broad and inclusive intergovernmental consultations concerning analysis of the gender architecture and the advancement of women, and consensus among States, are essential preconditions for ensuring that the models and practices adopted are properly legitimate and effective.

In that regard, and particularly concerning the possibility that accountability mechanisms may be established in the context of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), we underscore the contribution of the General Assembly to strengthening the cooperation with States in those complex tasks.

At the same time, we note with reservations the suggestions that have been made concerning the recommendation of the Secretary-General that Member States strengthen monitoring and accountability for the national implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), in particular through the establishment of a Security Council mechanism to monitor national implementation. My country considers that this recommendation is not appropriate, because it would eventually result in the creation of a mechanism whereby the Security Council would single out countries on the basis of thematic issues that should, according to the United Nations Charter, be discussed and dealt with in the General Assembly. We agree to the additional work that should be done towards the protection of the rights of women, as long as they remain under the purview of the existing United Nations forums in the area of human rights.

The approach that results from a mechanism such as the one that has been suggested does not seem to be the most appropriate for achieving sustainable solutions. We would always rather have cooperation, constructive dialogue and real support to countries when they are dealing with issues that concern human rights.

Seven years after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), Colombia has achieved important progress in strengthening the role and capacity of women and in the fulfilment of their rights. For our country, it is a matter of great importance to continue to have the support of the United Nations Systems on these issues, in the context of elaborating a positive agenda. It is in that spirit that my delegation will continue to actively participate in the consideration of this important issue.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): Austria commends you, Mr. President, and the Ghanaian presidency, for holding this open debate on women and peace and security, because we all agree that women are affected severely by conflict. All too often, however, they have no say in peace negotiations, peacebuilding and reconstruction. The adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) seven years ago was a milestone in acknowledging the crucial role that women should have in all efforts to promote peace. Despite certain developments, the full potential of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding has not been harnessed so far. There is no question that we need to address that gap as a matter of urgency.

Women across the world are ready to bear a key responsibility in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Allow me to give you an example: women in the Arab world and throughout the Middle East have become a driving force for political, social, economic and cultural development. The international conference on "Women leaders — networking for peace and security in the Middle East" held in Vienna in May 2007 proved that women are ready to reach out for dialogue to establish networks for overcoming barriers and finding sustainable solutions. The Austrian Foreign Minister, Ursula Plassnik, has therefore raised the need for sustained involvement of women with the new Envoy of the Middle East Quartet.

Austria has also invited women leaders from Serbia and Kosovo to meet in Vienna in November at a symposium entitled "Shaping our European future" in order to contribute to peaceful coexistence and cooperation in the region and to a common European future with Serbia and Kosovo. The role of women within the United Nations system needs further improvement. Until very recently there was not a single woman among the more than 50 United Nations Special Representatives and Envoys for conflict and post-conflict situations.

The Women Leaders' Network, co-chaired by Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, adopted at its recent meeting in Vienna a set of recommendations on the empowerment of women in the area of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. One of its key demands is a fair share of international mediation and peacebuilding positions for women. The recommendations were brought to the attention of the Secretary-General (A/61/1036). We are encouraged by his strong support and the recent appointment of Ellen Margrethe Løj as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia and of three women as Deputy Special Representatives. We hope to see more appointments of women to such leadership positions in the near future. Of course, we the Member States, have to make sure to nominate more female candidates for such positions.

We are deeply shocked by the recent reports of an unprecedented wave of mass rapes of women in the

Eastern Congo. Widespread sexual and gender-based violence is ongoing in other conflict and post-conflict situations as well. Those acts are horrendous crimes, for which those responsible must be brought to justice. They also have far-reaching implications for the development of affected societies in general. For that reason, Austria is increasing its support for campaigns against sexual violence and assistance programmes for victims of sexual violence in the Eastern Congo.

Austria strongly supports the zero-tolerance policy concerning sexual abuse and exploitation by United Nations personnel. It is simply unacceptable that peacekeepers and field personnel are still involved in cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. We therefore lend our full support to the ongoing work on a draft policy statement and comprehensive strategy on assistance and support to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations staff and related personnel.

Effectively mainstreaming a gender perspective into all peace and security issues is a prerequisite for addressing the reality of women in conflict and post-conflict situations. That requires an intricate understanding of the gender dimension and comprehensive information and data on the particular situation of women. To that end, the Security Council should consider — as previous speakers have already indicated — the establishment of a permanent monitoring mechanism on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

In August this year, the Government of Austria adopted a national action plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The plan was developed in close consultation with all stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations and academics. It foresees actions to be taken at the national, regional and international levels, including the following actions: the percentage of women among Austrian personnel in peace missions shall be raised, including by offering specific incentives to women; training programmes for Austrian personnel in peace missions shall be reviewed in order to systematically address gender aspects and the rights of women, including a firm zero-tolerance policy on sexual abuse and exploitation.

Austria will continue to lobby for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in the European Union and other regional and international organizations. Austrian development cooperation in post-conflict situations will continue to focus on gender-specific programmes.

The Austrian action plan is designed as a living document and will be reviewed annually. We are, therefore, very interested to share experiences and good practices with all countries. I am confident that the national action plan will be an effective tool for reinforcing our efforts to fully integrate gender aspects into our activities in the field of peace and security.

The President: I now call on the representative of Germany.

Mr. Matussek (Germany): Germany commends the Ghanaian presidency for holding this year's Security Council debate on women and peace and security, marking the seventh anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000). Germany associates itself with the statement made by the presidency of the European Union and would like to add the following remarks. Violence against women is one of the most widespread violations of human rights. Germany believes that it is imperative to eradicate violence against women and girls in all its forms. We are deeply concerned about the pervasive and sometimes systematic use of sexual violence against women, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, especially in conflict situations. We must increase our efforts at the national and international levels to find adequate responses to the problem — for the victims and for the perpetrators. We want a zero-tolerance policy.

In that context, Germany welcomes the initiative entitled Stop Rape Now: United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, which was launched in the beginning of 2007. One month ago, the German Federal Government presented its second action plan to combat violence against women. The action plan not only sets goals and targets to combat violence against women on a national basis, but also addresses the issue in the context of international cooperation within the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations. The action plan contains various references to resolution 1325 (2000).

Germany welcomes the initiatives of several countries, including Security Council members, to develop a mechanism to ensure the systematic integration and implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in the work of the Council, including resolutions, reporting requests and field missions. In that context, we welcome the fact that the

Peacebuilding Commission, Peacebuilding Support Office and Peacebuilding Fund have integrated a gender perspective into their work. Gender equality was identified as a critical cross-cutting issue for peace consolidation in both of the countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission: Burundi and Sierra Leone. Now, a dedicated effort is needed to implement it — in the field as well as in New York.

The promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women — whether in the context of conflict resolution or in the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals — is an essential part of the United Nations mandate. A coherent and effective implementation of that mandate, including Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), needs a coherent and effective gender architecture. Germany supports the concept paper on the subject prepared by the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro.

Let me re-emphasize that Germany, as a friend of resolution 1325 (2000), is deeply committed to the vision of that landmark resolution and continues to undertake various efforts to realize that vision. The German Government will account for its efforts and will present, on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November, a detailed report to our Parliament on German contributions to implement resolution 1325 (2000). The report will document a variety of measures contributing to the implementation of the resolution both at the national and the global levels — ranging from efforts to increase representation of women in all decision-making mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict to concrete projects aimed at ending violence against women all over the world.

Many of these projects have been conducted in cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Civil society plays a crucial role in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), and I wish to emphasize how greatly we welcome NGO participation in and contributions to our common efforts to work for women's equal participation and full involvement in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. McNee (Canada): I would like to express Canada's appreciation to you, Mr. President, and to Ghana for convening this open debate on women and peace and security, an annual tradition commemorating the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000).

Canada, as Chair of the Group of Friends of resolution 1325 (2000), would like to suggest that this year the Security Council begin a new tradition of assessing the implementation of this important resolution in a deliberate and concerted way throughout the year.

The United Nations System-wide Action Plan, alongside national implementation strategies, represents an important first step towards meeting the need for effective monitoring of and accountability for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). However, the ongoing obstacles to its implementation, both for the United Nations and at the national level, are now familiar to us all. The main challenge is that the tenets of the resolution have not been systematically institutionalized and accountability mechanisms are not in place.

We need only look at the situation of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to understand the urgent need to implement resolution 1325 (2000) systematically and to monitor its implementation. The international community is well aware of the difficulties in reliably quantifying such violence, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo is no exception. Large areas of territory in the volatile eastern areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are beyond the reach of the civil authorities, humanitarian agencies or relief services. This leaves many victims unaccounted for. Despite thousands of women having been raped, the prevailing culture of impunity allows the problem to continue unabated with virtually no prosecutions. The scale of the problem, including the lack of prevention, protection and punishment, is so immense that the social fabric of entire communities is being torn apart.

The Security Council can make a genuine difference here. It has a crucial role to play in the effective, timely and systematic implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Over the past few years, many Member States have stressed the need for an effective monitoring mechanism. That point has been made repeatedly and convincingly in today's debate. We

could not be more in need of a monitoring mechanism than we are today.

Canada has previously called on the Council to establish a mechanism to monitor its own actions in integrating resolution 1325 (2000) and other related resolutions into its daily work. Canada calls on the Council to establish such a monitoring mechanism in the form of a committee or working group with a mandate to regularly and actively monitor progress in implementing 1325 (2000) throughout the Council's work.

In his 2007 report (S/2007/567), the Secretary-General concluded that without concerted efforts by Governments and civil society at the country level, implementation of the resolution would continue to lag. In order to ensure a focus on women's rights and equality issues within the Security Council's country- and region-specific work, Canada calls upon the Council to commit itself to regular consultations with representatives of women's organizations in the countries that are on its agenda. We recommend that it also make fuller use of the analytical support and guidance available from the specialized United Nations entities working on the issues encompassed by resolution 1325 (2000), ranging from women's political participation to the elimination of violence against girls and women.

(*spoke in French*)

Canada joins others in stressing the importance of such a monitoring mechanism and the essential nature of the systematic collection of data that is cross-classified by sex, presenting information separately for women and men, girls and boys, in order to facilitate the proper functioning of such a monitoring mechanism. The Security Council needs to ensure that information on grave violations of women's and girls' human rights and their participation in peace and reconstruction processes is produced and utilized in the Council's work. The Security Council should ensure that information on violence against women and girls, including sexual violence, be included in all reports of the Secretary-General to the Council on the situations in individual countries, and in thematic reports. Additionally, there is a clear need for specific reports on sexual violence in conflict, as well as other aspects of resolution 1325 (2000), in order to better inform Council deliberations.

The creation of a monitoring mechanism and the regular presentation of disaggregated data and status reports will increase the Council's capacity to design and implement peace support mandates to better respond to such violence and to ensure the integration of to prevent gender-based violence in the work of United Nations country teams.

In conclusion, Canada will continue to support the Council's implementation of its commitments, including in country-specific contexts, and to support efforts to enhance Council and wider international action in this area.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamad (Sudan): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to join previous speakers in congratulating you on a very active Security Council presidency under your delegation's able stewardship, including the holding of today's debate on women and peace and security, which coincides with the seventh anniversary of the adoption of the Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

The aforementioned resolution laid the basis for cross-cutting, in-depth reflections on gender issues in conflict, post-conflict and peacebuilding situations. The resolution sets out a comprehensive plan of action on the status of women in the context of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and in accordance with the obligations set out in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the provisions of the resolution adopted at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, on women, development and peace, in order to

> "Ensure and support the full participation of women at all levels of decision-making and implementation in development activities and peace processes, including conflict prevention and resolution." (*General Assembly resolution S-23/3, para. 86 (b)*)

In this connection, the issue of women and armed conflict should not overshadow the broader issue of women, peace and social development, including the right to development by way of addressing the root causes.

We note the Security Council's request to the Secretary-General to submit a system-wide action plan to implement resolution 1325 (2000) (see

S/PRST/2004/40). The Plan includes major areas of action in the field of women and peace and security. It provides a framework for relevant inter-agency activities aimed at addressing this issue through strategies to promote a gender perspective, confidence-building and the development of local and regional women's organizations to complement the role of the United Nations at the regional and local levels.

Promoting a gender perspective in areas of conflict requires that reconstruction and rehabilitation programmes incorporate the promotion of practical participation by women in those areas by providing technical assistance, particularly training programmes for women in the fields of health and education. In that respect, we rely on the relevant United Nations agencies and bodies — including the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and UNICEF — to coordinate their inter-agency programmes for women and girls. We would like to underscore the need to abide by the principle of national ownership of those programmes and activities, which must respond to national priorities and must focus on the capacity-building of local institutions in charge of implementing such programmes.

At the national level, women's empowerment has been one of the Sudan's top priorities. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Darfur Peace Agreement both included provisions safeguarding the role and the active participation of women in peacebuilding and in the implementation of the relevant provisions of the two Agreements. Those provisions are premised on our traditions and values, which accord a particularly prominent position to women.

Moreover, since our national independence more than five decades ago, Sudanese women have had pioneering roles in, and have made contributions to, all aspects of Sudanese political, economic, social and cultural life. This year, those achievements culminated in the adoption of our first national strategy for the empowerment of women, which is fully aligned with the main pillars of the Beijing Platform for Action. I would also like to assure the Council that, as our country is currently preparing for the decisive Darfur peace talks to be held in Libya less than a week from now, the participation of women in the peace process would undoubtedly provide the dynamism and direction needed for the success of the talks.

We are hopeful that today's Council debate will have a positive impact on the status and the role of women in today's world. However, we would also like to propose that all pertinent proposals and suggestions presented throughout today's debate be used to enrich strategies currently employed by various United Nations stakeholders and bodies. We would also like to caution against unpleasant trends in this Organization aimed at politicizing women's issues in order to settle political scores. In that case, the victims would only be women, whom we are trying to assist.

The President: I now call on the representative of Argentina.

Mr. Argüello (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Permit me to begin by thanking the Ghanaian presidency for organizing this open debate, which reflects the Security Council's commitment to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We also welcome the overview given us concerning progress and gaps in the implementation process, as well as the report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2007/567).

Within the framework of a perspective focused on human rights, Argentina accords high priority to the situation of women in conflict and to women's participation in peace processes and in the peacebuilding phase. Resolution 1325 (2000) is the legal framework enabling such participation at both the national and international levels.

From the perspective of the United Nations system, we believe that we must strengthen efforts to systematically implement resolution 1325 (2000) in all areas of work, continuing to mainstream a gender perspective in all Council resolutions and in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. We commend the efforts being made in that regard, particularly the development and updating of the Action Plan for 2008-2009. We believe it is necessary to build on those foundations and to intensify efforts to achieve greater impact in the United Nations system and tangible progress in the situation of women and of gender equality.

As a result of our own experience, we recognize the importance of launching national action plans for

the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Such plans must be developed through a participatory process and must include mechanisms for monitoring and accountability on the part of Governments to ensure not only that a greater number of women participate in a country's decision-making processes, but also that their complaints and needs are taken into account at all levels of the State, particularly in institutional reform processes, including reform of the legislative, judicial and security systems.

In that connection, we wish to highlight the fact that Argentina has fully incorporated United Nations recommendations on gender issues into all aspects of its participation in peacekeeping operations. Last year, we completed our institutional revision, which provided women with access to all ranks of Argentina's security forces, at both the non-commissioned officer and officer levels. Likewise, Argentine women continue to occupy an important place in the troop contingents participating in peacekeeping operations. For example, we can say that more than 110 women have participated in the Argentine contingents in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti and that Argentina's first female military observer is currently working in the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. Furthermore, the Argentine Centre for Joint Peacekeeping Operations Training includes in its teaching a gender perspective in administration and in the training it provides.

We cannot fail to highlight Argentina's commitment to combating violence and discrimination against women and girls. In our country, that commitment is becoming a State policy whereby State bodies with competence in this area include civil society organizations. In that connection, we reaffirm our support for the Secretary-General's decision that the United Nations should play a stronger and more prominent role in efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, as well as for the launching of a global campaign of the Secretary-General on violence against women at the end of 2007.

In conclusion, we believe it is imperative to identify concrete measures to enhance the effectiveness of our commitment to the situation of women and of gender equality by ensuring women's participation in peacebuilding processes and by establishing mechanisms for accountability at both the national and international levels with respect to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We believe that an implementation mechanism within the framework of the Council, which could be based on the model adopted in resolution 1612 (2005), on children in armed conflict, will be an essential and effective tool to that end.

The President: I now call on the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Kim Hyun Chong (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I wish to join previous speakers in expressing my sincere gratitude to you, Mr. President, for holding this open debate on women and peace and security.

Over the seven years since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women, peace and security, much has been achieved in terms of implementation by Member States, civil society and the United Nations system. The Secretary-General's report (S/2007/567) is a compilation of the reports on progress made by each entity. It notes, for example, the adoption by five entities of action plans for gender mainstreaming in their work on conflict prevention, the implementation of early-warning mechanisms by seven entities and the appointment of gender advisers in eleven peacekeeping missions.

Unfortunately, however, these efforts were rather fragmented and incoherent. So far, the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is far from sufficient. Women continue to be excluded from or marginalized in peacemaking and peacebuilding processes. There has been some integration of gender perspectives, but it has not been systematic, nor has it adequately encompassed all facets of the process, including conflict prevention, early warning, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian responses, post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Most disturbing to the Republic of Korea is the fact that sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict is growing in many places. My delegation is particularly appalled by occurrences of systematic rape and sexual violence.

Paragraph 10 of the resolution

"Calls on all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict."

Paragraph 11 emphasizes the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls.

The brutal facts of sexual violence against women and girls in many armed conflicts make it horribly clear that the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) has fallen far short of its intended aims.

My delegation believes that this poor implementation is not the fault of the Secretary-General or of the United Nations entities; rather, it is the Security Council's lack of accountability and the failure to implement the resolution.

The Secretary-General's report also identifies as key challenges fragmentation and insufficient institutional capacity for oversight and accountability for system performance. The report explains that the current action plan was not established as a tool for monitoring, evaluation and accountability, and its revised action plan attempts to fill that gap. While we appreciate this effort to improve reporting, we do not believe it is the solution to the greater problem.

What we most urgently need is a dedicated and effective Security Council mechanism for overall integration and implementation of the resolution in the Council's work. This mechanism would bear the responsibility to provide directives and to oversee, monitor and evaluate such implementation. Secondly, the Security Council urgently needs to address the serious situation of the sexual violation of women and girls.

It is the view of the Republic of Korea that, in implementing the resolution, we should consider regional approaches, including the utilization of existing regional arrangements. Effective regional entities could provide added value through their established networks, solidarity, communication and accessibility. However, we must keep in mind that the ultimate accountability lies with the Security Council, not with regional entities. Therefore, regional entities should play a complementary role, not act as substitutes. Nevertheless, as long as the participation of regional entities is making a substantial contribution to implementation, the regional approach will remain a valid one.

In addition, my country hopes that the dialogue for system-wide coherence regarding the gender architecture will be finalized as soon as possible to expedite a coherent response from the United Nations system across the board for women's empowerment.

My delegation looks forward to a concrete outcome from today's discussion. Through substantive improvements in the implementation mechanism and the strong will of the Security Council to end grave sexual violence in armed conflict, we can make real progress in implementation and reconfirm the accountability of the Security Council. The Republic of Korea is fully committed to ensuring the realization of the United Nations promise to women in armed conflicts.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. Lisson (Australia): At the outset, I would like to make clear that an election has been called in Australia and that the Government is currently operating under caretaker provisions.

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) is an affirmation of the important role of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Women's participation is crucial to the viability and success of peace talks, peace agreements, recovery from conflict and long-term peacebuilding. Women's involvement means that not only are the serious issues of disarmament and demobilization addressed, but the equally serious social and economic issues that are essential to long-term, sustainable peace, are also dealt with.

Australia recognizes that. In March this year, the Australian Government launched the new gender equality policy for the Australian aid programme. This policy's overall goal is to reduce poverty by advancing gender equality and empowering women. The policy sets out what Australia will do and provides sample results on gender equality that can be incorporated into Government programmes and initiatives. Two of the key outcomes the policy targets are the equal participation of women in decision-making and leadership, including in fragile States and conflict situations, and the advancement of gender equality in regional cooperation efforts. Working towards these outcomes will help implement resolution 1325 (2000).

Over the past five years, Australia has continued to fund a number of activities in the Asia-Pacific

region aimed at implementing resolution 1325 (2000). The people-to-people links forged as a result of these activities have provided a platform for women's participation in decision-making for peace and security at all levels — community, national and regional.

For example, Australia supported the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat Regional Workshop on Gender, Conflict, Peace and Security last year. This workshop, the first of its kind in the Pacific, was attended by policymakers, representatives from military and law enforcement agencies, and women's nongovernmental organizations from all 16 Pacific Island Forum countries. The workshop succeeded in putting the issue of resolution 1325 (2000) on the regional agenda, and the outcomes are now guiding follow-up work on gender, peace and security in the region.

In another example, femLINKpacific, together with counterparts in a number of Pacific island countries, is part of a regional women's network on resolution 1325 (2000). Through assistance provided by Australia, femLINKpacific's regional media network has launched a resolution 1325 (2000) website to assist with the dissemination of information on resolution 1325 (2000) as widely as possible. FemLINKpacific has also established a regular resolution 1325 (2000) e-news bulletin. In addition, work has started on translating the resolution into local languages and, for the first time, stories about the resolution in the Pidgin and Tongan languages are being featured.

Australia is also funding a regional peace talks training project, through the International Women's Development Agency. The project serves to develop a national framework in three Pacific countries for the implementation of outcomes, recommendations and commitments designed to ensure gender equality in matters relating to peace and security in those countries.

Further, Australia is contributing towards a project aimed at mainstreaming gender in policies and programmes to prevent violence and conflict and to strengthen post- conflict recovery in the Pacific region. The project, jointly managed by the United Nations Development Programme Pacific Centre and the United Nations Development Fund for Women, will review existing research on violence reduction and conflict prevention from a gender perspective; undertake research in a number of Pacific countries to address gaps in existing knowledge on issues of violence and masculinities; and publish, disseminate and advocate for incorporation of the findings into work plans and policies of relevant agencies and organizations throughout the Pacific region.

Projects and ongoing regional dialogue such as those that I have just outlined increase the availability of information by and about women's contributions to improve the peace and security environment, whether at the local, national or regional level. They are examples of ways of achieving the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and ensuring that any peace support operations and security sector reforms are gender-inclusive.

Australia also continues to actively engage women in our peacebuilding efforts. Women military, police and civilian personnel play a key role in our assistance to United Nations peacekeeping missions and bilateral and regional endeavours such as the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands.

In closing, Australia is looking forward to participating in the discussion on the equal participation of women in conflict prevention, management and resolution, and in post-conflict peacebuilding, which will take place at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women session in 2008. In preparation for this discussion, the Australian Government is consulting with the Australian women's sector on measures they have undertaken to implement resolution 1325 (2000).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Honduras.

Mr. Romero Martínez (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. Minister, your presence here adds great value to the Council's consideration of this topic, and it also underscores the importance that your country attaches to the subject. We wish to commend you on the important initiative of convening this meeting on women and peace and security.

My country, Honduras, believes as the Security Council affirmed on 7 March 2007, that women play an important role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding (see S/PRST/2007/5). We therefore condemn the harassment, attacks on security, abuse, rape and any other manifestation of

violence or oppression to which women may be subject, anywhere in the world.

For this reason, we fully associate ourselves with resolution 1325 (2000). Not only do we associate ourselves with it; we also consider that its implementation should be an ongoing international obligation of States.

We support the increased representation of women at all levels, especially at decision-making levels, in conflict resolution and peace processes. We are certain, as has been indicated here in earlier speeches, that the time has come for action. We continue to hear of and to witness devastating events that once again demonstrate a lack of human sensitivity and the absence of adequate responsibility in terms of compliance with our obligations.

Our country, which is small geographically, not only values respect for the dignity of women; it is also, in keeping with its domestic legislation, trying to mainstream women in all spheres of daily activities. It wishes to see their equitable participation in the decision-making organs and is incorporating them in conjunction with all sectors, in particular civil society, in the struggle to promote the observance of human rights and respect for the rule of law and to combat marginalization and any kind of oppression or discrimination.

The humanitarian responses of the United Nations in any part of the world, as indicated by the report of the Secretary-General, must have inherent in them a common policy of incorporating gender equality programmes. In post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation, mechanisms and strategies designed for and specifically aimed at women and girls should be established. For this reason, we appreciate very much the activities that various organizations of the United Nations system are carrying out, incorporating women in their projects. Among these, we would highlight the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, which has organized virtual debates on the incorporation of gender issues into the reform of the security sector.

We also welcome the updating of the Action Plan for 2008-2009, and we hope that it will be implemented successfully.

Prevention of violence motivated by gender in armed conflicts and response to this violence must be tackled immediately. We all hope that acts of sexual exploitation and abuse will end once and for all and that everywhere in the world the values of women and of girls will be regarded as sacred, as their integrity and dignity should also be.

Consequently, the delegation of Honduras associates itself with the endeavours to achieve consistent and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The value of a human being, the value of a woman, the value of a girl, must be upheld by a collective consciousness of respect worldwide.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Ms. Juul (Norway): Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) is more than the text of a good decision. It is a process: a process of implementation, but also a process of awareness and understanding. It is necessary at the decision-making level, as well as at the implementation level, to constantly strive for an improved understanding of the situation and the role of women in conflict.

The process leading to resolution 1325 (2000) and the seven years that have passed since its adoption has brought about an increased understanding of the role, needs and vulnerability of women and girls. It has provided us with a useful platform to redouble efforts to ensure that women are included in peace processes, so that their needs can be addressed and the peace processes thus effectively sustained.

We must nevertheless conclude that we are still far from where we should be. Women are still too often neglected in peace negotiations; they are not allowed to participate on equal terms with men. Women's perspectives are still disregarded and their concerns and needs overlooked. Women and girls are still targets and victims of injustice, assault and sexual violence. And impunity for atrocities committed against women remains largely unresolved. Most shameful of all to us here in the United Nations, the Secretary-General's declared zero-tolerance policy is still not getting through to civilians and soldiers, and allegations of sexual misconduct by United Nations peacekeepers continue.

After seven years and commendable efforts by Member States, the United Nations and the Security

Council, we should have been doing better. We must do better. As a step in that direction, Norway encourages the Council to take the following specific decisions: first, to develop a monitoring mechanism to improve its contribution to preventing and redressing violence against women in armed conflict, as proposed by the Secretary-General; secondly, to develop a transparent mechanism to ensure that gender issues are specifically addressed and reported on in all United Nations peace operations; and thirdly, to mandate a reporting mechanism on sexual violence within peacekeeping missions.

The challenge does not stop there. We need to expand efforts beyond traditional institutional boundaries. We must realize the multidimensional aspects of consolidating peace, which will be elusive if half of the population's concerns are ignored. We cannot allow stovepiping to hinder actual progress on the ground.

Last month, here at the United Nations, the Foreign Ministers of Brazil, France, Indonesia, Norway, Senegal, South Africa and Thailand invited interested ministers and delegations to consider areas where foreign policy more or less directly affects global health. Conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding are such areas. It is well understood that improved health is an important peace dividend. In our view, it is less well understood why and how that is, or how insufficient attention to health issues may contribute to the collapse of peace processes.

In his summing up, the Foreign Minister of Norway referred to that — inter alia, by pointing to conflict as an area where sufficient attention has not been paid to focusing on health, and where specific focus could drive change, such as through the development and use of gender-specific health indicators to better assess peace and reconstruction processes; establishing road maps for health recovery as a peacemaking tool; and gaining empirical and gender-specific knowledge of the effect of health interventions at different stages of conflicts.

Given that work's focus on the health impact of conflict on women and girls, I would like to take this opportunity to insist that we still need to improve our understanding of that impact, and that we need to act on it. One neglected area in that regard is health recovery after conflict. The scars — which are often mental as well as physical — take considerable time to heal. Health services that can contribute to normalcy and hope in the lives of women and girls take considerable time to establish and to work. Conversely, ignoring the health impacts of conflict can hamper stabilization and the consolidation of peace.

We look forward to continue work with our partners to ensure that the relationship between conflict and health issues is better understood and taken into account in the areas of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. We invite members of the Security Council to join us in that effort.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Croatia.

Mrs. Mladineo (Croatia): I would like to express my appreciation to the Ghanaian presidency of the Security Council for the holding of this open debate on women and peace and security.

Croatia has aligned itself with the statement made by the representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union, but I would like to add a few points on the matter on behalf of my Government.

Various case studies suggest that peace agreements, post-conflict reconstruction and governance have a better chance of success when women are involved, in part because women have an inclusive approach to security and address key social and economic issues that might otherwise be ignored. Let us not forget that, in all countries, women's burden of work is generally much heavier than that of men, leaving less time and energy for involvement in political life. It is therefore vital for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women to increase women's participation in politics so that two tenets of Millennium Development Goal 3 can be reached.

Croatia strongly believes that women in conflict situations need special attention by this powerful body of the United Nations. Both the report of the Secretary-General on the girl child (A/62/297) and the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (A/62/228) state the same thing: traditional attitudes towards girls in societies limit their right to express their views, and girls seeking asylum, refugee girls and internally displaced girls are in need of special protection from physical or mental violence. The Committee on the Rights of the

Child has noted with concern the lack of effective measures to prevent and prosecute the perpetrators of violence against women and girls by military personnel, including by foreign military personnel stationed on military bases.

Beginning in childhood, women face discrimination ranging from lower levels of education to prevailing social attitudes doubting their competence as decision-makers. Although many rights have been recognized for children in general, it is interesting to note that, although 185 countries are parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention is subject to one of the highest numbers of reservations of any United Nations treaty. That underscores worldwide resistance to women's rights.

Ensuring that women have a greater voice in household and community decisions is critical to fulfilling their rights, as well as the rights of children. It is beyond doubt that women would ensure the systematic inclusion of children's concerns in peacemaking and post-conflict phases. If women's and children's rights are not explicitly part of the discourse at those critical stages, they will not be addressed as they deserve.

The exclusion of women from peace negotiations and the drafting of constitutions, as well as from the effective reform of the security sector, governance and the rule of law, means that their rights and views, not only as victims but also as citizens and former combatants, will not be fully represented in post-conflict reconstruction stages. Let us not forget that even among child soldiers up to 40 per cent are girls.

At the end of 2006, women representatives from the Ministry of Women's Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan paid a visit to Croatia in the framework of cooperation between the two countries. As Afghan women representatives stated, the goal of their visit was to gather experience from Croatian women in dealing with war and post-war situations. As they explained, unemployment and an illiteracy rate of 70 per cent are among the greatest problems of their society. Those are some of the reasons why men turn to drug abuse and family violence, which often leads to the self-immolation of women.

That example shows that in the past decade women across the world have managed to become increasingly involved in conflict resolution processes. There has also been significant progress in the United Nations system in terms of policy reforms, norm-setting and institutional development. However, a large gap between policy and practice still exists, in particula, at the country level.

Croatia is participating in 15 United Nations peacekeeping operations, with female peacekeepers comprising 7 per cent of its personnel. In addition, we are implementing a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation and abuse in field operations.

Croatia welcomes the fact that the Council's attention was seized with the issue of ensuring stronger accountability mechanisms for the integration of resolution 1325 (2000) into the country-specific and related thematic work of the Council. Croatia would welcome it if the Security Council were to consider establishing a dedicated monitoring mechanism that would increase the Council's contribution to preventing and prosecuting violence against women in armed conflicts.

The President: I call on the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mrs. Booto (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to convey to you, Sir, our warm congratulations on your effective guidance of the Security Council's work in October. I should especially like to express my delegation's appreciation to the delegation of Ghana for taking the initiative of organizing this meeting on women, peace and security towards an effective and coherent implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), which is the subject of today's debate.

My delegation fully endorses the statement made by the representative of Zambia on behalf of the Southern Africa Development Community.

The Beijing Platform for Action highlighted the need to achieve gender equality through systematic national and international gender mainstreaming strategies. The twenty-third special session of the General Assembly allowed us to make a little progress towards gender equality and improving conditions for women.

The implementation of the pioneering resolution 1325 (2000), one aim of which is to integrate the gender dimension into all aspects of peace and security, has important objectives. It will entail, inter alia, establishing institutions capable of ensuring the

protection of women and girls and their full participation in national, regional and international mechanisms for the prevention, management and settlement of disputes. The fulfilment of those aims will depend to a large extent on a well-motivated and sustained intervention by Member States, with the active support and cooperation of the United Nations and other partners, including the mobilization and participation of civil society. In that regard, Governments are called on to make the necessary efforts to strengthening women's capacities to contribute fully with their knowledge and skills.

My delegation shares the view already expressed by other delegations that it is also important for the Secretary-General to consider appointing more women as special representatives and envoys to conduct good-offices missions in his name, and to seek to increase the role and contribution of women in United Nations operations on the ground as military observers, civilian police personnel, human rights specialists and members of humanitarian operations. Substantial progress has been achieved, but additional effort must be made to remove the last remaining obstacles to the full implementation of the resolution.

Violence against women and girls remains a major concern, calling for greater effort on the part of the entire international community, because such violence, as a violation of human rights, represents a major obstacle to implementing gender equality. Echoing the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women, the General Assembly adopted resolution 61/143 on intensifying efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, which called on Member States and United Nations entities to step up their action to prevent and eliminate such violence. The Security Council replied to that appeal by keeping that issue on its agenda and reaffirming its commitment to implementing resolution 1325 (2000).

During a series of visits to my country, Council members were able to assess the efforts of the new freely and democratically elected Congolese authorities. They had in particular an opportunity to gain an overview of the security situation. My delegation is highly concerned at the moment by the increased and unprecedented violence perpetrated by armed militias in the eastern part of the country. Such acts of violence, particularly sexual violence — systematic attacks on Congolese women and girls — are motivated by the inveterate need of the perpetrators to destroy an entire nation by assaulting the dignity and physical and moral integrity of its women.

Faced with that situation, my country's institutions in implementation of the law on sexual violence adopted by Parliament and enacted by the President of the Republic in 2006, are firmly resolved to crack down on all crimes of sexual violence and will ensure care for the victims. The Head of State himself is determined to come down very hard on the culprits behind such aberrations. He has made security one of his priorities in putting an end to such barbarous acts.

In that respect, support is vital if we are to give the regular forces substantive means of dealing with those armed groups. The militias operate with the financial and political support of foreign actors involved in the looting of our natural resources, which to this very day remains the major factor behind the longevity of the conflict.

Some countries have made systematic rape a weapon of war and have used HIV-infected soldiers in their sordid business of sexual violence against women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. One of the most catastrophic consequences — the transmission of HIV/AIDS — continues to sow desolation in my country. The brutality of such rapes has also caused numerous cases of fistula, entailing the total destruction of the reproductive system. Although it deprives thousands of victims of sexual violence of their vitality and their hope, that scourge does not make front-page headlines.

In that regard, I wish to pay tribute to the First Lady of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mrs. Olive Lembe Kabila, who, as a mother and woman of action, has become directly involved in appealing to the conscience of all in such cases. She has played an active role in the campaign organized by the national programme for reproductive health and is caring for victims of sexual violence, with the support of medical agencies and teams providing pro bono surgery for victims. The campaign has also sought to inform the national community of the existence of that disorder and above all to educate political actors about the disasters caused by armed conflict.

I take this opportunity to recall once again that the Democratic Republic of the Congo attaches special importance to the contribution of women to the promotion of peace and in all areas of life. We

vigorously condemn all sexual violence in all armed conflicts, as well as all sexual assault and exploitation committed by any party whatsoever, including United Nations personnel. We stress the need to eradicate impunity. If we are to eliminate this scourge, it is important to take preventative measures and to punish the perpetrators. My delegation therefore supports the zero-tolerance policy adopted by the Secretary-General.

In conclusion, I thank members of the Council for their significant contributions to the efforts to re-establish lasting peace and reconciliation in my country. My delegation hopes that this Security Council debate will contribute to strengthening awareness of the importance of the role of women in maintaining peace and security and in peacebuilding.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Nicaragua.

Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Nicaragua wishes to commend you, Mr. President, the Permanent Representative of the fraternal country of Ghana, for the initiative of holding this open debate in the Security Council. Likewise, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report on women and peace and security, which described the achievements in implementing resolution 1325 (2000) and the institutional and organizational difficulties that need to be overcome in the next plan of action in order to fulfil that resolution.

Women throughout the ages have played a very important role in the decisions that have changed the course of history. Many of those women have been forgotten, omitted from historical accounts by chroniclers who disregarded their participation in the transformation of ideas and societies. Some years ago, the words "women and peace and security" would only bring to mind women as victims of conflict and the objects of sexual violence. Now, they must be recognized as a decisive factor in peace negotiation processes, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.

In Nicaragua, women have held a key role, despite the difficult situation in which they have lived, in the most important decisions that have affected our society. They have been a vital element in the reconciliation of family members and of members of society that fought on opposing sides in the war of foreign aggression. Nicaraguan women have distinguished themselves as leading actors in achieving peace and reconciliation. As companions, mothers, sisters and members of society in general, they have succeeded in moving towards full participation in the decision-making process on projects and programmes that affect their community and their own lives, at all phases of the process, from diagnosis and planning to monitoring and evaluation. That has been a key factor in the successful reconstruction process in our country. That experience proves that it is possible to provide women with the space in which to work to achieve lasting peace and sustainable development.

We are grateful to all the specialized agencies, programmes, funds and entities of the United Nations system involved in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), and we urge them to continue to incorporate the gender perspective in all of their activities, so as to ensure that women participate in decision-making processes at all levels on matters of peace and security.

We are exceedingly concerned by the complaints regarding rape in peacekeeping operations, and we would invite all the actors involved to comply with the policy of zero tolerance for acts of sexual exploitation and abuse. We join in the call for an end to be put to impunity. Nicaragua believes that the Secretary-General must continue to step up his efforts to increase the presence of women at all levels in peacekeeping operations, including the highest ranks. We are sure that such measures will help to reduce crimes of a sexual nature.

We urge that more effective measures be considered by both the General Assembly and the Security Council aimed at implementing resolution 1325 (2000). We join in the appeal to the international community to play a leading role in seeking to ensure that women participate in international peace and security processes, while at the same time recognizing that States bear the major responsibility for promoting and implementing national policies that allow for the empowerment of women in that area. Without the inclusion and participation of women in all decision-making processes, we will never attain the international peace and security for which we all yearn.

Mr. Sow (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to warmly congratulate you, Mr. President, for the vigour, effectiveness and

dedication that you have shown at the head of the Security Council.

The Republic of Guinea is pleased once again to contribute to the collective and multilateral thinking on the implementation of the System-wide Action Plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Identifying and assessing progress made in that area in terms of follow-up and empowerment, both nationally and internationally, are at the heart of our concerns.

I must begin by emphasizing that it is at the initiative of the First Lady, the president of the foundation bearing her name, Maman Henriette Conté, that for the first time a national educational campaign was launched on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in Guinea. In fact, on 26 October 2006, the First Lady of the Republic, supported by the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, whom I welcome here, decided to jointly organize, with the Minister for Social Affairs and the Promotion of Women and Children of Guinea, a commemorative day to celebrate, in Conakry, the sixth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) by the Council.

The ceremony had many participants, including members of Government, representatives of national institutions, the Chief of Staff of the army, members of the diplomatic consular corps, representatives of international institutions, non-governmental organizations and civil society. The themes presented and conveyed by public and private media were focused on the content of resolution 1325 (2000) and on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls — women, as victims of conflict and parties who prevent and manage conflict, and in their capacity as protagonists for peacebuilding in Guinea and in the region.

The same day, meetings to sensitize and familiarize political, administrative and religious authorities, the public and concerned partners on issues surrounding the resolution were organized in the five communities of the capital and in the national languages. That political commitment for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) stems from the high degree of responsibility that has always been shown by Guinean women.

Their responsibility was illustrated once again during the tragic events that took place in Guinea in January and February 2007, after the general strike called to put an end to bad governance and poverty. Guinea and all of Africa did not fail, at that time, to welcome the efforts made by women, in particular by the First Lady, to promote dialogue and cooperation among social stakeholders and to take up the serious challenges of peace, security and stability in the country.

Guinea is pleased to have once again found peace, the restoration of the rule of law and improved national cohesion, thanks primarily to the determination of, and sacrifices made by, women.

In that context, we were pleased to receive the second report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the System-wide Plan of Action for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We support its major recommendations, in particular those concerning the 2008-2009 Action Plan, conceived as a results-based instrument for programming, follow-up and information. The concentration of future action in the five thematic areas identified in the report cannot fail to ensure the successful establishment of an integrated, coherent strategy for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) by all parties involved at the national, regional and international levels.

In conclusion, I wish to renew the commitment of the Government and the women of Guinea to play a leading role in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). I appeal to the international community to provide effective and sustained support to the actions and initiatives undertaken by all concerned in order to increase the mobilization of women and attain their full participation in processes of conflict prevention, peacebuilding and the building of stability in our country and in our subregion.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Malawi.

Mr. Matenje (Malawi): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your delegation's presidency of the Security Council for the month of October 2007. My delegation is grateful to be given the opportunity to address the Security Council during this open debate on the theme, "Women and peace and security: towards a coherent and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)".

We associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Zambia

on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). We would like to add the following remarks.

Given that peace is inextricably linked to equality between men and women, the importance of involving women — in our view the world's most effective peacemakers — in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, cannot be overemphasized. In that regard, we note that resolution 1325 (2000) calls upon Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict.

In Malawi, for example, in support of that call women have been integrated in political and decision-making processes at various levels of Malawian society. Women now occupy prominent positions in the Government and parastatal organizations and have demonstrated themselves to be effective leaders by ensuring that the people of Malawi always remain focused on activities that are aimed at attaining social and economic development for the country. In that regard, women have been instrumental in sustaining the relative peace and security that Malawi has enjoyed since independence in 1964, proving the point that peace does not necessarily mean only the absence of war or armed conflict.

Accordingly, we urge the United Nations to take further deliberate steps to increase the participation of women in the highest-level decision-making positions in peacekeeping operations, conflict prevention, peace negotiations, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.

We believe that the incorporation of a gender perspective in those areas is critical for the achievement of sustainable and lasting peace at both the national and the international levels and for achieving the internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This is even more critical in countries such as Malawi, where the population of women is larger than that of men and where the majority of women are engaged in the agricultural production that drives the economy.

In that regard, we call upon the Security Council to work in coordination with other United Nations bodies, particularly the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Human Rights Council, the United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the Peacebuilding Commission and others, in seeking measures that would ensure that the MDGs are achieved in full by 2015 in a peaceful and secure environment that is fit for all.

We note with concern from the report of the Secretary-General contained in document S/2007/567 that institutional gaps and challenges such as inadequate funding for gender-related projects and insufficient institutional capacity for gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations have impeded the full implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on women and peace and security for 2005-2007. However, we are confident that those challenges and gaps will be addressed as the United Nations embarks on the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on women for 2008-2009, which, as we understand it, is a results-based programming, monitoring and reporting tool.

Therefore, we hope that adequate and predictable mechanisms will be introduced to support the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in an efficient, transparent, accountable, coherent and sustainable manner that takes into account the special needs of women and children, particularly in situations of armed conflict. These include putting an end to gender-based violence and degrading and inhumane treatment, which has resulted in millions of women and children in armed-conflict-afflicted areas losing their limbs or their lives. We are particularly appalled by reports of the sexual exploitation of women and children, particularly by the very same people who are entrusted with the responsibility to protect them.

We support the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report and in that respect underline the importance of establishing a Security Council mechanism to monitor the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) at the national level. We believe that this would help to address gender-based violence and abuses of human rights and women's rights during conflict and in post-conflict situations.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate that resolution 1325 (2000) holds out a promise to women and girls around the globe that the international community is ready to protect their rights both in times of peace and in times of war or armed conflict, and to remove all barriers to their equal participation and full

involvement in the maintenance and promotion of sustainable peace in the world in general and in their own communities in particular. Seven years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the United Nations needs to do more to keep and realize that promise.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Denmark.

Mr. Faaborg-Andersen (Denmark): Allow me to begin my statement by thanking the presidency for convening this meeting and thereby once again directing the attention of the Security Council to the indispensable and vital role of women in all efforts to build and maintain peace and security. Furthermore, I would like to associate my delegation with the earlier statement by the Permanent Representative of Portugal on behalf of the European Union.

The report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2007/567) presents an overview of achievements, gaps and challenges, as well as recommendations for further actions to accelerate the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). The report concludes that the United Nations system has made significant advances in implementing resolution 1325 (2000). United Nations entities are focused on mainstreaming a gender perspective and human rights in the areas of peace and security. United Nations capacity has been enhanced, advocacy strengthened and partnerships with women's organizations built.

However, the report also confirms the existing institutional and organizational gaps and challenges in the implementation of the resolution. That is regrettable, as implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is as important as ever. Women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations, wherever they may be, cannot afford delay.

The 2008-2009 Action Plan is conceptualized as a results-based programming, monitoring and reporting tool. We welcome the sharpened focus on the five thematic areas of prevention, protection, participation, relief and recovery and the normative sphere, and thus the shift from project to programme implementation. A broader framework linked to national peace and reconstruction processes is provided. It commits the United Nations system to enhance coherence and to integrate a gender perspective.

Our commitment to results-based programming is deeply felt. We all recognize the importance of guidelines, workshops and gender-inclusive procedures as important stepping stones and important tools for the required capacity development. But at the end of the day it is the results that count. It is the responsibility of the United Nations system, as well as of national Governments, to increase the visibility of the outcome and impact of the initiatives undertaken. Have women and girls on the ground then been able to register improvements? A year ago we regretfully came to the conclusion that we do not really know. This year the answer is the same.

I sincerely hope that next year, we will be able to say that we have achieved increased protection of the rights of women and girls during and after conflict. Our ambition should be to take decisive steps towards fully incorporating a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations, peace negotiations and Security Council missions. We have to come much closer to full and equal participation of women in peace processes at all levels of negotiations and in decision-making.

One of the major lessons learned from the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in 2005-2007 is that without concerted efforts with Governments and civil society at the country level, the implementation of the resolution will remain elusive. Effective links between the Action Plan and the national implementation efforts are not yet well established and need special attention.

Denmark was one of the very first countries to formulate a national action plan for implementing resolution 1325 (2000), and we are currently in the process of updating and revising the plan. Through a broad and comprehensive approach we are doing so with the full and active involvement of Danish civil society. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence and the National Police in cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other partners are developing a plan with strengthened focus on women's active participation in peacebuilding processes and decision-making at all levels and with strong focus on visibility at the country level.

In our efforts to contribute to the implementation of the resolution, Denmark has found that resolution 1325 (2000) is still little known at the country and grass-roots levels. We urge the Security Council to

work on visibility alongside the actual implementation efforts.

Protection of girls and women in conflict situations is still crucial, and involvement of women in peacebuilding processes broadens our perspective on security. We should all like to see more lasting peace agreements. Inclusive processes will make this all the more likely.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya.

Mr. Muburi-Muita (Kenya): Let me join other delegations that have spoken before me in commending you, Sir, for convening today's debate on women and peace and security and also for your excellent leadership in the work of the Security Council for this month of October.

My delegation is cognizant that women are critical agents of change in development, and that investment in them creates a multiplier effect that enriches and accelerates the improvement of their status in society. Kenya affirms the centrality of gender equality in all spheres of life including governance and decision-making, and it recognizes the critical role that women must play in development. As part of Kenya's effort to fully implement this objective, the Government has adopted a national policy on gender development and established a national commission on gender and development. The aim is to integrate women in decision-making through legal, regulatory and institutional reforms.

We must all emphasize the centrality of gender mainstreaming, in particular by including women at all levels of decision-making on peace and security issues, and especially during conflict prevention and resolution processes as well as in post-conflict peacebuilding. Women's perceptions and concerns should form an integral part of any peace process. Women must be participants at the negotiating tables. It is therefore gratifying to note that the United Nations has, over the years and more particularly since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), made significant progress in mainstreaming gender perspectives into peace initiatives. Kenya further encourages this decision and calls for the further involvement of local women in all processes.

My delegation acknowledges that since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), significant progress in its implementation has been achieved by Member States, the United Nations system and civil society. This year's report of the Secretary General (S/2007/567) further demonstrates this encouraging advancement. The progress is slow, however, and more needs to be done to tackle institutional and organizational gaps in the implementation. These include the need for capacity to understand and implement gender mainstreaming programmes, leadership and commitment in implementing the resolution, adequate accountability mechanisms and resources and interagency coordination. In view of this, Kenya welcomes the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report (S/2007/567) aimed at strengthening the implementation of the resolution.

Kenya appreciates that the Department of Peacekeeping Operation has made strides in promoting gender equality in peacekeeping operations and in the incorporation of gender expertise in peacekeeping missions. These have been useful steps, but we still need to ensure sustained efforts in gender mainstreaming at all levels of peacekeeping operations. Currently, Kenya has deployed women to most of the peacekeeping missions where we have troops, and we are determined to increase the numbers.

Resolution 1325 (2000) emphasized the need to incorporate gender perspectives in post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding. We are grateful to note that increased attention has been given to the role of women in post-conflict rebuilding processes, especially in the judicial, legislative and electoral sectors, as well as in the restoration of the rule of law and transitional justice. Women still need considerable support and capacity-building to be effective in new democratic and legal structures that have traditionally been dominated by men.

We commend the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for their pivotal roles in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Over the past decade, UNIFEM and UNFPA have been at the forefront of the promotion of the role of women in peacebuilding and post-conflict situations, especially in Africa. However, limitations in funding and resources threaten to undermine this effort. We urge Member States to explore strategies that will ensure the alignment of resources with priorities and ensure adequate and regular funding for activities related to the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

In conclusion, it is the sincere hope of my delegation that the accountability, monitoring and reporting system will be strengthened to ensure enhanced coordination and implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to start by thanking the President for convening this open debate on women and peace and security.

Costa Rica would like to reiterate its commitment to the defence and promotion of human rights of women and girls. It expresses its concern because, in spite of some progress made in this area, the Organization as a whole today is not sufficiently prepared to face the grave challenges that are urgent in this context. The violence against women, especially in situations of armed conflict, has become an endemic problem. For this reason, it should be approached comprehensively with a time-horizon that goes beyond the immediate and with mechanisms that go beyond well-intentioned improvisation.

It is ironic that women are excluded almost completely from the peace processes when it is they who most suffer the consequences of armed conflict. It is they who are the great majority of the refugees and displaced persons; and it is they who are the most likely to be victims of all consequences of wars. I say it is ironic because it is generally recognized that women are agents of change and engines for development. For this reason, Costa Rica would like women to have a major role and effective participation in any decisions taken in areas of conflict prevention and conflict resolution, as well as in the design and implementation of reconstruction and peacebuilding.

There are few situations where the link between peace, security, development and human rights is as clear as in gender-based issues. To ensure progress towards lasting peace and security and towards the effective protection of human rights of all individuals in situations of armed conflict, Costa Rica is convinced that it is necessary to give women effective empowerment. The United Nations should facilitate and promote national activities aimed at that objective.

Furthermore, the multidimensionality of the problems of women and girls in situations of armed conflict requires a systemic approach. In that connection, Costa Rica understands that all United Nations organs and programmes should participate in an active and coordinated manner in efforts to overcome the great challenges in this area. We are concerned at the compartmentalization of issues that, by their very nature, are entirely cross-cutting, as the Secretary-General indicates in his note contained in document A/61/583. For that reason, we consider it imperative to move forward without delay in discussing and taking swift decisions regarding the Organization's gender architecture.

At the same time, Costa Rica believes it is important to strengthen the political commitment of all actors. In that connection, we wish to reaffirm the importance of fulfilling the commitments set out in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as those made at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, particularly with regard to attaining the six strategic objectives of the Platform for Action pertaining to armed conflict.

We are convinced of the need to support States — particularly those that find themselves in or emerging from a situation of armed conflict — in capacity-building in the areas of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Mindful of that priority consideration, we urge that the 2008-2009 Action Plan be updated to make it a results-based instrument through monitoring and reporting in its thematic areas. We look forward to the assessment of the results of this support tool.

Finally, despite all the challenges still facing us, it is important to highlight and recognize the efforts of the Security Council and of the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system aimed at the effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). We also welcome supplementary efforts in that regard, with special mention of the work of the International Criminal Court to criminalize sexual and gender-based violence and to protect civilians in armed conflict.

A coordinated, coherent and results-based response that promotes and encourages fulfilment of the commitments made by States over the years is the best way to guarantee that peace, security, sustainable development and respect for human rights will be the pillars supporting the future of our nations.

The President: I now call on the representative of Viet Nam.

Mr. Hoang Chi Trung (Viet Nam): First of all, permit me, on behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, to thank you, Mr. President, and the delegation of Ghana for taking the initiative to organize this open debate. As a member-elect of the Council, we look forward to working with the other Council members to bring about further progress in implementing resolution 1325 (2000).

I also thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2007/567).

Alongside basic instruments on gender equality, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) continues to be the guidelines in dealing with the issue of women, peace and security. The Vietnamese delegation is pleased to note that, as highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General, the work of United Nations entities since the first review of the implementation of the Action Plan, held in 2006, has laid important groundwork for a long-term effort by the United Nations system towards the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

Progress has been reported in a wide range of spheres of activities, such as conflict prevention and early warning; peacemaking and peacebuilding; peacekeeping operations; humanitarian response; post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; preventing and responding to gender-based violence in armed conflict; and preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian and peacekeeping personnel. However, in the view of my delegation, what is most important of all is the increased political commitment of many entities to gender equality and women's empowerment in peace processes. We would not have seen improved advocacy, enhanced leadership and greater support by senior officials of those entities, as well as their better engagement with Member States and partnership with national mechanisms for women and women's associations and networks — which are all valuable and commendable — without such increased political commitment.

On the one hand, the large number of entities involved points to the potential of the United Nations system to advance our cause. On the other, it shows how great the need is to ensure effective inter-agency coordination. In that connection, in addition to the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, my delegation commends the efforts made by the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Women, Peace and Security.

The report of the Secretary-General points out that, while both the 2006 and 2007 implementation reviews clearly demonstrate progress, they also identify a number of institutional gaps and challenges, as well as the weaknesses of the Action Plan itself. Gender imbalance has not been adequately addressed, leaving women underrepresented in the Secretariat. In some areas, the representation of women has even decreased in comparison with last year. Capacity-building, coordination and cooperation by and among United Nations entities should be improved considerably. On top of that, the issue of adequate and predictable funding requires, as always, undivided attention, if we are to strengthen and further the progress made.

We agree with the Secretary-General that, taken together, those gaps and challenges constitute shortcomings in the capacity of the United Nations system to effectively implement resolution 1325 (2000). With regard to the way forward, the reconceptualization of the 2008-2009 Action Plan is designed to address those gaps and challenges, including in the areas of monitoring and reporting, capacity-building, partnerships and networking, et cetera. The results-based framework for 2008-2009 is being developed to produce concrete and measurable results. We welcome the intention to consolidate all activities by United Nations entities into five thematic areas under the updated 2008-2009 Action Plan. While sharing the hope that that step will help improve both implementation and monitoring, we believe that we should not lose sight of actions aimed at long-term impact, which is sometimes intangible and hard to measure. On another note, we support the proposed establishment of a database on good practices and lessons learned.

Vietnamese women have always played an active role in national defence in times of war and in national construction in times of peace. In Viet Nam today, gender-sensitive legislation, policies, strategies and programmes of action and the network of national mechanisms for the advancement of women all work together for the achievement of gender equality and the advancement of women in all aspects of life —

political, economic and social. In Viet Nam, the cause of the advancement of women and the enhancement of their role enjoys the ongoing support of the country's leadership, and of men. We will continue to support and cooperate with United Nations entities, non-governmental organizations and other partners in implementing resolution 1325 (2000).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Myanmar.

Mr. Wai (Myanmar): Mr. President, I thank you for the opportunity to take part in this open debate on women and peace and security. My delegation identifies with the view that gender equality plays an essential part in promoting and advancing peace and security. We therefore wish to commend the Ghanaian presidency of the Security Council for taking the initiative to hold this open debate. My delegation also wishes to commend the Secretary-General for his report focusing on the United Nations System-wide Action Plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

We note that the area covered by the report is large and diverse. The implementation review of the 2005-2007 Action Plan provides a good starting point for the way ahead. It shows that progress has been achieved in many substantive areas of the Action Plan. It also confirms the existence of institutional and organizational gaps and challenges in the implementation of the Plan by the United Nations system. We also note that the 2008-2009 Action Plan attempts a sharpened focus. The original 12 areas of action contained in the 2005-2007 Plan have now been reconsolidated into five thematic areas, namely, prevention, participation, protection, relief and recovery, and normative initiatives.

In Myanmar's national effort to promote gender equality, organizations such as the Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation, the Myanmar Women Entrepreneurs Association and the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association play an important role. Hand in hand with these organizations, the Government promotes policies to ensure that the needs and priorities of women and girls are addressed. In this regard, Myanmar's traditions and culture play an important part. Traditional law guarantees the equal rights of women, including the right to own and inherit property.

We subscribe to the view that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Women and girls are the most vulnerable among the population who suffer from conflicts. More often than not the root causes of conflict are poverty and socio-economic and gender inequality. In the case of my country, which has emerged from over four decades of insurgency, the main cause has been weakness of the State constitution that was imposed upon us at the time of independence. Until recently, Myanmar has had to face the challenge posed by 18 insurgent armed groups. However, the Government's policy of national reconciliation has resulted in the return of 17 of these groups to the legal fold.

Today, we are implementing a political road map, the first crucial stage of which is the adoption of a new State constitution that is acceptable to the entire Union, made up of over 100 ethnicities. Recently, we successfully completed a national convention, which laid down the basic principles to be enshrined in the new constitution. On 18 October, the Government formed a commission to draft a new constitution. Once completed, it will be put to a national referendum.

Myanmar's traditions, culture and values, which facilitate our national efforts to promote gender equality, are important pillars in the Government's commitment to protect women and girls from human rights abuses, including sexual and gender-based violence. My delegation therefore takes exception to the allegations of sexual violence levelled against the Myanmar armed forces. In this connection, we categorically reject the unfounded allegations made this morning by the representative of the United Kingdom.

Let me set the record straight. The Myanmar military has been falsely accused of gang rape on the basis of reports issued by the expatriate Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN), the Shan Human Rights Foundation (SHRF) and the Kareni Human Rights Group (KHRG). It should be noted that in 2002, the United States Department of State's country report on Myanmar identified both SHRF and KHRG as organizations that have associations with insurgent armed groups. The allegations levelled at the Myanmar military come from those groups that are associated with the insurgents.

The Security Council has had first-hand experience with reports emanating from exiles that are at variance with reality. Rape, let alone gang rape, is regarded by the Myanmar people and Government as a most dastardly and abhorrent crime. Whenever such a crime is committed, we make sure that the full force of law is applied against the perpetrators. Three separate investigations regarding these allegations have been carried out by the authorities and organizations concerned, including the Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation. In genuine cases, perpetrators were prosecuted and sentenced in accordance with the law.

The report of Secretary-General has rightly pointed out that in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), concerted efforts of Governments and civil societies at the country level are vital for success. We are encouraged that the recommendations to further accelerate the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) include the need for the international community to support national implementation. We also look forward to the early establishment of the database of good practices envisaged in the Secretary-General's report. Both the United Nations and its national partners can put to good use the knowledge resulting from the good practices and lessons learned on the implementation of Resolution 1325 (2000).

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Hossain (Bangladesh): Let me begin by complementing you, Mr. President, for the leadership of Ghana in its stewardship of the Council's deliberations during the current month. I would also like to thank the presidency for its initiative in organizing this open debate on women and peace and security pursuant to the landmark resolution 1325 (2000). It is with a modicum of pride that I recall that Bangladesh, a member of the Council at that time, was closely associated with the resolution's adoption.

Women suffer most as victims of conflict, and in peace processes they are those most deprived of the dividends. Their voices are not fully listened to, or even heard. Today, seven years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), we need to reflect further on how best to advance its goal. We need to analyse what constitutes the challenges, and how these challenges can be overcome. We need to ensure adequate representation of women at all levels of decision-making in conflict prevention, during hostilities and through post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation. The true measure of women's participation in peace negotiations is not through numbers, but through power in decision-making. It is undeniable that in the consolidation of peace the role of women remains vital.

The Secretary General's report on women and peace and security (S/2007/567) notes some progress in the implementation of the System-wide Action Plan 2005-2007. It is our hope that the remaining shortcomings will be addressed in the updated 2008-2009 Action Plan in order to meet the desired goals. The overall experience so far in implementing 1325 (2000) at all levels of decision-making has been mixed.

A number of persistent constraints remain to be addressed. The challenges, particularly at the institutional and organizational levels, have not been dealt with adequately. There is seemingly an inadequate understanding of the gender dimensions in conflict situations. This leads to gaps in the capacity to address various provisions of resolution 1325 (2000). In our view, this largely impedes the implementation of the resolution.

The availability of gender-disaggregated data is particularly important in understanding the situation of women and girls who are victims of war and conflict. A focused examination of issues particularly related to violence against women is also important in formulating policy guidelines. This is an exercise that would assist in undertaking preventive measures. The sharing of experience and good practices and lessons learned on a regular basis are useful not only in sustaining peace but also in guiding policy measures.

Peacekeeping operations are no longer limited to military activities. They now have broader mandates to assist in elections, monitor human rights and carry out police functions. Multidimensional peacekeeping operations thus have large potential in addressing the security of women. We have integrated the gender perspective in some aspects of United Nations peacekeeping operations. However, in post-conflict peacebuilding efforts much remains to be done. As one of the largest troop contributors to United Nations peacekeeping operations, Bangladesh is ever conscious of its responsibilities to incorporate essential elements of resolution 1325 (2000) in the predeployment training of peacekeepers. As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, we remain vigilant in our focus on the provisions of the resolution. We

recommend that all relevant United Nations resolutions should take note of resolution 1325 (2000) and call for its full and effective implementation.

We also recognize that a strong Security Council mechanism is needed to monitor implementation of the resolution. Establishing a working group on women, peace and security may be useful and a good option in this regard. In our view, coordination among various United Nations agencies and their reporting mechanisms should be enhanced in order to implement resolution 1325 (2000) at the grass-roots level. We hope that with the updated Action Plan for 2008-2009, we will succeed in overcoming the weaknesses through concerted efforts. It is our belief that integrating gender perspective across the United Nations system will keep in view geographical, cultural and ethnic factors. Adequate resources should also be mobilized to this effect. Active involvement of the civil society and non-governmental organizations is a sine qua non.

A critical factor in the successful implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) is high-level commitment in administration and the establishment of an effective accountability mechanism. Without explicit commitment, the policy guidelines and its programmes and plans are all of very little use. We believe that the protection of women and girls from gender-based violence and abuse is a primary and enduring responsibility. There should be zero tolerance with respect to the perpetrators. Ending impunity is a must. It is crucial to mobilize leadership, secure accountability, provide adequate resources, identify challenges and address root causes in protecting women and girls, in war as well as in peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Al-Jarman (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the United Arab Emirates, I have the honour of thanking you, Sir, for your delegation's fine efforts in the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October, including the initiative to organize today's open debate on the role of women and peace and security.

Seven years have passed since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which established an approach and a clear Action Plan designed to protect of women during armed conflict and to promote of their participation in conflict prevention. However, we are far from achieving the desired objectives in this area, particularly at a time when the reports and statistics from conflict areas are unanimous in the view that women and children are still the principal victims in these conflicts. In most cases, they are the main target of combatants and armed factions and are deliberately subjected to different forms of attack, ethnic cleansing and forced displacement, among other human rights violations.

The United Arab Emirates is following with satisfaction the United Nations Action Plan covering the period 2005-2007 on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), including the achievements in the areas of monitoring, evaluation and accountability. We reiterate that this Plan still needs more evaluation and development in order to address shortcomings, in particular those created by insufficient funding for gender-related projects. Another shortcoming is weak institutional capacity in monitoring and accountability and the universalization of gender perspective.

We strongly condemn the prevalence of all acts of aggression and violence against women and girls in armed conflict and in post-conflict situations. We underscore the need for cooperation between the entities of the United Nations system, in particular the Peacebuilding Commission, for which the United Arab Emirates has provided support. We have contributed to the budget of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as to those of several organizations, civil society and institutions, relevant governmental and regional non-governmental working groups in order to achieve full implementation of the provisions of this resolution, including the full empowerment of women in the fields of peacekeeping and peacebuilding and the implementation of development and humanitarian operations.

If these goals can be achieved, countries will be helped more effectively to strengthen their respective legislation and training activities aimed at the prevention of gender-based violence in armed conflict, as well as improving the institutional environment for accountability, monitoring and reporting on the situation of women and for ensuring their full and effective participation in political, security and social areas of activity.

We support the efforts made so far to rethink the United Nations Action Plan for the period covering 2008-2009 and transform it from a mere instrument for programming, monitoring and preparing reports to an

effective tool that will promote the role of women in the five main thematic areas of prevention, participation, protection, relief and recovery and the normative sphere. Nonetheless, we wish to stress the following points.

First, there is a need to fully involve Governments and civil society in the implementation of the Action Plan. This is in addition to giving continuous support and development assistance to countries emerging from conflict so as to help them finance their gender-related and human rights projects and to design and implement comprehensive national plans involving women, thus empowering them fully and effectively, particularly in the fields of peace and security, in accordance with the provisions of resolution 1325 (2000).

Secondly, we need to adopt the gender perspective in all peacekeeping operations and other relevant activities, including women's increased involvement in decision-making processes so as to mitigate the negative impact of illegal activities perpetrated against them, including acts committed by individuals participating in such activities. We must find innovative ways of training and application in order to facilitate women's participation in elections, government and post-conflict reconstruction efforts, such as those adopted by the World Food Programme.

Thirdly, there is a need to improve mechanisms for the immediate reporting of violations of the human rights of women in areas of armed conflict, including rape and other forms of sexual violence.

Fourthly, we must strengthen national, regional and international legislation to end impunity for those who commit sexual violence against women. We must also endeavour to establish independent and neutral commissions and tribunals to prosecute and punish perpetrators of war crimes and those who commit rape during wartime.

Fifthly, a comprehensive international system must be established to provide information to all Member States and facilitate the exchange of best practices and lessons learned with regard to strengthening the role of women in the area of peace and security.

Sixthly, comprehensive public information and awareness programmes must be developed, especially for countries in conflict or emerging from conflict, in order to promote the full implementation of international humanitarian and human rights law protecting the human rights of women and girls during armed conflict.

The United Arab Emirates has made great strides in empowering women and integrating them in all areas of our society, including in the political, economic and social spheres, as well as in human services and civil defence. We have also endeavoured to participate in peacekeeping operations in many areas of armed conflict, so as to alleviate the suffering of injured and displaced people, the majority of whom are women and children.

The United Arab Emirates would like to express its continuing concern about the dismal situation of victimized women throughout Palestine as a result of the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory and its repressive practices against women and their families. A similar situation prevails in Iraq as a result of acts of violence and terrorist bombings. Such acts constitute some of the gravest violations of international humanitarian norms and laws, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, of 1949. We therefore reiterate our call on the international community to shoulder its responsibility in the implementation of all relevant United Nations resolutions. We would also like to underscore that, without the necessary political will, those regions will continue to live in insecurity and instability, which serve to fuel violence against women.

In conclusion, we hope that our debate on this item will lead to the adoption of an integrated international, institutional approach to the issue of women and peace and security in order to make a positive contribution to improving the status of women in today's world.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Benin.

Mr. Ehouzou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time that I am taking the floor in the Security Council this month, I would like, on behalf of my delegation, to warmly congratulate you, Sir, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Council. Your presence here, Mr. Minister, elevates the level of this debate and attests to the particular interest that the Government of Ghana attaches to this important subject. My delegation is grateful to you for having organized this debate on the implementation of

resolution 1325 (2000), which allows us to take stock of the efforts made by the United Nations and the international community to promote the equal participation of women in the resolution of conflicts, peacebuilding and the prevention of conflicts throughout the world. Resolution 1325 (2000) set out well-defined objectives to guide those efforts.

The exhaustive analysis of the Secretary-General contained in his latest report (S/2007/567) allows us to evaluate the significant progress made in gender mainstreaming in the activities covered, as well as in promoting the recovery and development of countries emerging from conflict. However, the report also points to delays in implementing the 2005-2007 Action Plan due to a lack of commitment at certain levels. Institutions that have not yet established action plans in that regard should be encouraged to endeavour to swiftly put such plans in place, in order to ensure the consistent implementation of the resolution in the context of the Action Plan for 2008-2009. We welcome in particular the common policy in the area of gender equality, which is aimed at facilitating the exchange of information on good practices and lessons learned in peacekeeping operations.

The participation of women and the taking into account of women's interests are directly linked to the degree of commitment to their advancement. The more that women are involved in the search for solutions to the problems of our societies, the more the solutions that are found will contribute to promoting their crucial role and to the recognition of the importance of women to the maintenance of peace and security and to the progress of our societies.

Violations of the rights of women are intolerable, as is the physical cruelty from which they continue to suffer. The international community must document and resolutely combat such acts. Efforts to facilitate the identification of ill treatment against women and young girls in armed conflict, and to identify their needs in post-conflict situations, should include the intensification of the fight against impunity for crimes against them. International judicial bodies must be more involved in punishing gender-based violence against women. If national jurisdictions do not address that issue effectively, the International Criminal Court should itself be encouraged to take up cases of large-scale rape and sexual exploitation of women and young girls. We believe that to be an appropriate approach, given the astronomical number of documented victims cited in the report of the Secretary-General.

The establishment of the System-wide Action Plan for 2008-2009 on the basis of lessons learned from the previous Action Plan has made possible the very timely targeting of a more limited number of key thematic areas to serve as points of reference and evaluation of efforts undertaken. The implementation strategies from which the new Action Plan emerged are a good example of the integrated approach called for by the complexity of the issue. By seamlessly linking the development of policies with advocacy, capacity building, working in partnership and networks and the provision of goods and services, that approach clearly underscores the key role of Governments and civil society in expanding the degree to which resolution 1325 (2000) is implemented. It also reflects an acknowledgement of the need to synergize the efforts of various actors with those being made at the regional, national and international levels.

On the whole, we can clearly see from the Secretary-General's report that the United Nations has effectively supported the systematization and institutionalization of its approach to the gender problem. Evidence of that is the establishment of a database; the dissemination of information; the recommendation to establish an integrated knowledge and information management system accessible to Member States; and the strengthening of inter-agency coordination, programming and resource mobilization.

In the light of all this, I am pleased to note that my Government fully agrees with the implementation framework and firmly skews its national policy in favour of the promotion of equality. In that respect, Benin recently adopted a new family code recognizing and promoting the equality of men and women in Beninese society. In order to promote the full enjoyment of women's rights, our Government has chosen to establish positive social discrimination measures to the benefit of women. We are considering the creation of a women's institute that will study policies to develop women's potential. That was, inter alia, one goal behind the introduction in Benin of mandatory and free primary education for all children. The measure was primarily targeted at young girls in rural areas. Benin is also heavily involved in seeking a minimum of 30 per cent of management positions being held by women by 2015.

The implementation of measures to promote gender equality requires the mobilization of major resources and the establishment of considerable operational capacity. That is why I urgently appeal to the international community to mobilize adequate resources to allow a meaningful implementation of the gender approach in the countries involve.

The President: After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council reaffirms its commitment to the full and effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security and recalls the relevant statements of its President as reiterating that commitment.

"The Security Council reaffirms the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the primary responsibility of the Security Council under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security.

"The Security Council recalls the 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1), the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled 'Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century' (A/S-23/10/Rev.1), in particular the statements in these documents concerning women and peace and security and the Declaration of the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women (E/CN.6/2005/11).

"The Security Council recognizes the importance of ensuring the respect for the equal rights of women and, in this regard, reaffirms the importance of the equal role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding, and stresses the need for their full and equal participation in peace processes at all levels. The Council urges Member States, regional and subregional organizations and the United Nations system to enhance the role of women in decision-making with regard to all peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction and rebuilding of societies as vital in all efforts towards the maintenance and promotion of sustainable peace and security.

"The Security Council is concerned that armed and other types of conflicts still persist in many parts of the world and are an ongoing reality affecting women in nearly every region. In this regard, the Council expresses deep concern that civilians, particularly women and children, continue to account for the vast majority of victims of acts of violence committed by parties to armed conflicts, including as a result of deliberate targeting, indiscriminate and excessive use of force. The Council condemns these acts and demands that those parties immediately put an end to such practices.

"The Security Council reaffirms in this regard that parties to armed conflict bear the primary responsibility to take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of affected civilians, in particular, giving attention to the specific needs of women and girls.

"The Security Council recognizes the constant underrepresentation of women in formal peace processes and is deeply concerned about persistent obstacles and challenges resulting from situations such as violence against women, shattered economies and social structures, lack of rule of law, poverty, limited access to education and other resources, various forms of discrimination and stereotypes.

"The Security Council remains concerned about the low number of women appointed as special representatives or special envoys of the Secretary-General to peace missions. The Council urges the Secretary-General to appoint, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical representation, more women to pursue good offices on his behalf. The Council urges Member States to redouble their efforts to nominate women candidates to the Secretary-General for inclusion in a regularly updated centralized roster. In turn, the Council calls on the Secretary-General to increase the profile and transparency of this procedure, and issue guidelines to Member States on the process of nomination to senior posts. In addition, the Council reaffirms its call for broader gender

mainstreaming in all peacekeeping operations, and welcomes United Nations peacekeeping operations policies to promote and protect the rights of women and to take into account a gender perspective as set out in resolution 1325 (2000).

"The Security Council takes note of the second follow-up report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security (S/2007/567), and the various initiatives and actions undertaken by the United Nations entities in the context of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000); calls on the Secretary-General to update, monitor and review the implementation and integration of the Plan; conduct a system-wide evaluation in 2010 of progress achieved in implementing the Plan in 2008-2009; and report thereon to the Council.

"While welcoming the progress achieved so far, the Security Council recognizes the need for full and more effective implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

"In this regard, the Security Council reiterates its call on Member States to continue to fully and effectively implement resolution 1325 (2000), including, where appropriate, through the development and strengthening of national efforts and capacities, as well as the implementation of national action plans or other relevant national-level strategies.

"The Security Council calls on the international community to provide, where needed, financial and technical support, as well as adequate training, for national implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), and on the United Nations system, civil society and other relevant actors to collaborate and provide assistance in line with national priorities of Member States, particularly those affected by armed conflict, in the rapid development of national action plans, and work closely with national mechanisms responsible for the implementation of the resolution, including, where appropriate, through the United Nations country teams. To this end, the Council requests the Secretary-General to include in his annual report to the Council information on progress on measures taken to improve, where appropriate, the capacity of relevant Member States to implement resolution 1325 (2000), including information on best practices.

"The Council emphasizes the importance of strengthening cooperation between Member States as well as the United Nations entities and regional organizations in adopting and promoting regional approaches to the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) in all its aspects.

"The Security Council strongly condemns all violations of international law, including international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law, committed against women and girls in situations of armed conflict, including killing, maiming, sexual violence, exploitation and abuse. In this regard, the Council urges the complete cessation by all parties of such acts with immediate effect.

"The Security Council is deeply concerned that despite its repeated condemnation of all acts of violence, including killing, maiming, sexual violence, exploitation and abuse in situations of armed conflict, and despite its calls addressed to all parties to armed conflict for the cessation of such acts with immediate effect, and for the adoption of specific measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape, and other forms of sexual abuse, as well as all other forms of violence, such acts remain pervasive, and in some situations have become systematic and have reached appalling levels of atrocity. The Council stresses the need to end impunity for such acts as part of a comprehensive approach to seeking peace, justice, truth and national reconciliation.

"In this context, the Council reiterates paragraph 9 of resolution 1325 (2000) and calls on all parties to armed conflict to respect fully international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls, especially as civilians, in particular the obligations applicable to them under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977, the Refugee Convention of 1951 and the Protocols thereto of 1967, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 and the Optional Protocols thereto of 1999 and the United Nations

Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and the two Optional Protocols thereto of 25 May 2000, and to bear in mind relevant provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to include in his reporting to the Council on situations of armed conflict information on progress in gender mainstreaming throughout the United Nations peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions; data on the impact of armed conflicts on women and girls, including accounts of instances of all forms of violence against women and girls, including killing, maiming, grave sexual violence, abductions and trafficking in persons, committed by the parties to armed conflict; special measures proposed and taken to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape, and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict, in order to end impunity, ensure accountability and uphold a zero-tolerance policy for violence against women and girls.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to prepare a follow-up report on the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), incorporating information on the impact of armed conflicts on women and girls in situations that are on the agenda of the Council, and also information on their protection and on the enhancement of their role in peace processes, to be submitted to the Security Council in October 2008, and may request the Secretary-General to give an oral briefing on the progress of the report.

"The Security Council decides to remain actively seized of this matter."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under symbol S/PRST/2007/40.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 7.10 p.m.